

C-SPAN ARCHIVES

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS FORUM:  
EMPOWERING THE REPARATIONS MOVEMENT

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, September 14, 2000

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\* \* \* \* \*

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

ANNOUNCER: The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation is holding their annual legislative conference this week in Washington, D.C., and today on Capitol Hill the foundation hosted a forum on the movement to obtain reparations for slavery. Among those taking part were Congressmen John Conyers and Tony Hall, and Dorothy Height from the National Council of Negro Women.

MR. CONYERS: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to capitalizing on our strength, empowering the reparations movement. I, John Conyers, and my colleague from Florida, my dear friend Congresswoman Carrie Meek are bringing us together to discuss empowering the reparations movement.

We're delighted to have all of you here and our panelists in particular. I have Congressman Tony Hall of Ohio to my right; State Representative Derrick Hale. Next to

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1 him then we have attorney Adjua Ayatoro;  
2 Dr. Conrad Worrill; Ms. Lillian Kamura, the  
3 past president of the Japanese American  
4 Citizen's League; Dennis Rogers of the  
5 National African American Student  
6 Association, of which he is president. Then  
7 my colleague Congressman Meek.

8 We have Dorothy Height, president  
9 emeritus of the National Council of Negro  
10 Women and a founder of Black Family Reunions,  
11 Delta Sigma Theta, and many other  
12 organizations. We're glad to have her here.

13 My good friend from Detroit, State  
14 Representative Edward Vaughn, an incredible  
15 leader and sponsor of the reparations  
16 activity in the state of Michigan and the  
17 leader in Michigan. We also have Dr. Claude  
18 Anderson, the president of Harvest Institute  
19 who has been with us on many other occasions.  
20 Then we have, let's see, who's down here,  
21 Yvette Simmons, the president of the National  
22 Bar Association. Isn't she from Florida too?

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1 Yes, also from Florida. Then we have Mr. Sam  
2 Anderson, the Black Radical Congress.

3 Let's give all of our presenters a  
4 round of applause.

5 Two people are under a little bit  
6 of time constraints so let's begin with  
7 Dr. Dorothy Height, National Council of Negro  
8 Women, to begin our discussions. I have a  
9 statement that I will add immediately after  
10 she and Tony Hall have completed their  
11 presentations. Right now we turn the floor  
12 over to Dr. Dorothy Irene Height.

13 DR. HEIGHT: Thank you, Congressman  
14 Conyers. I like the way that the theme for  
15 today is stated, because it is not discussing  
16 a theory, it's not discussing just a program,  
17 but it's in a sense saying that our purpose  
18 is to see how we empower ourselves and how we  
19 strengthen the movement for reparations. To  
20 me, that's a long way from where we used to  
21 be. Because for a long while I think that  
22 often many of the discussions of reparations

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1 seemed around the fringes, and I think there  
2 were those who took them rather lightly and  
3 thought there was no real substance to them.

4           But I think today we are more than  
5 ever awakened to the reality that the  
6 struggle that we're talking about has to deal  
7 with slavery; that somehow or other we have  
8 been caught up in segregation and  
9 discrimination, in dealing with prejudice and  
10 bigotry, with dealing with the denial of  
11 opportunity, with all of these things. But  
12 what we have failed to do is to witness the  
13 role that slavery has played in the life and  
14 in the development of our country; that  
15 slavery is not discrimination; that it is the  
16 subjugation of people; it is a treatment of  
17 people as if they were not human; it is a  
18 dehumanizing process.

19           When we think about it, I'm sure  
20 the scholars can tell us the numbers, but  
21 what we will discover is that it is not --  
22 that there is no way to know how many valued

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1 people were lost in the slave trade, no way  
2 of knowing what that did to our families as  
3 we were scattered and some were sold and some  
4 simply died in the passage.

5           So that I think for me this is an  
6 opportunity as we take the bill that has been  
7 introduced and the leadership that  
8 Congressman Conyers and Congresswoman Meek  
9 are giving to us to take that leadership as  
10 an opportunity to really bring to light what  
11 slavery was.

12           I have been doing some study around  
13 Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.  
14 When you read and know what really happened  
15 to people, you come to understand that we  
16 have to take some credit for not having the  
17 story of slavery brought forward. I remember  
18 when I was growing up in Pennsylvania and I  
19 was in a school where there were nine black  
20 students, that whenever slavery was mentioned  
21 we cringed, and those who were about us  
22 looked at us in very strange ways.

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1 I think that has almost been  
2 characteristic in our country. There are  
3 those who say I have no responsibility  
4 because I was not here, but all of us take --  
5 all of us claim the benefits that are our  
6 country, and slavery was a real part of it.  
7 And I think that when we talk about  
8 reparations, we're talking about not  
9 something to be given to us, but something to  
10 be recognized for what we contributed to make  
11 this country great.

12 I was appointed by President Carter  
13 to serve on the Holocaust Memorial Council,  
14 and those 6 years were very valuable to me  
15 because Marv Reston and I constantly raised  
16 the question, what will we do about those who  
17 have been the victims in our own country and  
18 in the development of our own country. One  
19 of the things you will note is that this  
20 is -- the United States is the only country  
21 outside of Israel where there is a memorial  
22 that recognizes the Holocaust.



1           We did not put it in a competitive  
2 site. We were not begrudging what is being  
3 done about the Holocaust. We were simply  
4 saying the time has come for recognition of  
5 what it has meant to us as a people, that we  
6 have had so many people lost in the passage.  
7 So I welcome this opportunity and feel that  
8 there is something that all of us can do.

9           I remember years ago when we were  
10 fighting against lynching that we never got  
11 an antilynch bill, but we were able to do  
12 more to study lynching. But we still haven't  
13 dealt with -- we haven't really abolished  
14 lynching. We simply don't see it in the same  
15 ways.

16           I believe that now at this stage in  
17 our history with the media and with all of  
18 the ways that we are connected through  
19 electronic means that we have an opportunity  
20 and that our or every organization, every one  
21 of us should be about helping all to  
22 understand what slavery was and that those

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1 who worked for no pay, whose labor helped to  
2 build even parts of our nation's capital,  
3 came into the country. And though we have  
4 made great advances for so long and even now,  
5 we worked for low pay. So that we've gone --  
6 we've always made a contribution, and unless  
7 many of us in this room join hands with our  
8 coworkers in other groups who understand  
9 this, unless we take the lead it won't  
10 happen.

11 I am grateful that Congress -- that  
12 people have introduced this legislation. I  
13 believe it's our job to build a constituency  
14 in support of it, an informed constituency,  
15 informed that we know that we can speak to  
16 what we not only have contributed, but what  
17 we have lost in terms of lives.

18 I think we have -- we look at  
19 education and we see now that as you talk  
20 about it where we are, and even in the need  
21 for education we have to realize that  
22 education was denied us. But over and above

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1 that, that there is a job of education even  
2 in the African American community.

3 I say in our -- whenever we  
4 celebrate I say we even have our children now  
5 think of themselves as the descendants of  
6 slaves. We never seem to be able to let them  
7 know who the slaves really were, and that  
8 they were descendants of African kings and  
9 queens and inventors who were made slaves;  
10 they were not born slaves, they were made  
11 slaves; and those who were born slaves after  
12 they came to this country still had so much  
13 that they lost as well as so much that they  
14 contributed.

15 So I just want to say that I  
16 believe that we no longer have that bashful  
17 approach to the issue of slavery, that this  
18 bill gives us an opportunity not only to  
19 speak up for the bill, but to help everyone  
20 of every race, creed, and color know that  
21 people of African descent in this country,  
22 for us, reparations is not something just

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1 discussed academically or philosophically,  
2 but it needs to be made real and think we  
3 should leave here determined to help it  
4 happen.

5 (Applause)

6 MR. CONYERS: Thank you very much.  
7 That couldn't have been a more appropriate  
8 opening statement, and I'm so glad that you  
9 were willing to lead us off. Dear Ms.  
10 Height, Dr. Height, you mentioned slavery and  
11 lynching. Twenty-four hours ago on the House  
12 floor we were dealing with the question of  
13 lynching because the hate crimes bill came up  
14 again, a motion to instruct the conferees  
15 which I managed on the House floor, and which  
16 traced the creation of the hate crimes bill  
17 back to 1968 when the assassination of  
18 Dr. Martin Luther King occurred.

19 Then we traced it even back then to  
20 the '30s when Ida B. Wells and Dr. W.E.B.  
21 Dubois and the NAACP were campaigning for an  
22 antilynch law. So the hate crimes

1 legislation is a direct descendent of the  
2 antilynching efforts started several  
3 generations ago.

4           We were victorious in turning away  
5 our opponents' motion to instruct the  
6 conferees on hate crimes and our position in  
7 which all of the members of Congress at this  
8 panel supported. We won over a number of  
9 Republicans as well to have our position  
10 supported.

11           So there is a timeline that unless  
12 you study the history of this struggle, you  
13 think that hate crimes is just dealing with  
14 the lynching and violence and murders of  
15 blacks and gays and other people who someone  
16 didn't like because of their race, color,  
17 sex, gender, orientation, but there is a  
18 history and that history was ably touched on  
19 by you and reinforced by what we did in the  
20 Congress.

21           DR. HEIGHT: As you say that, it  
22 reminds me that I probably am here today

1 because in 1937 with Juanita Mitchell as a  
2 young person I helped to organize -- she and  
3 I organized -- the United Youth Committee  
4 Against Lynching in Harlem. Every time there  
5 was a lynching the NAACP put out a flag on  
6 Fifth Avenue that said a man was lynched  
7 today. When that happened we gathered all of  
8 our troops and went down to Times Square and  
9 we marched around Times Square wearing black  
10 and white arm bands saying stop the lynching,  
11 stop the lynching.

12           That's why I feel that if we can  
13 get our young people to understand the nature  
14 of slavery and these things, it's going to --  
15 this is an opportunity for an education for  
16 which I think people are ready. But I --  
17 when you speak that -- spoke of that, it just  
18 reminded me that that's where I got my  
19 first -- with that and with Adam Clayton  
20 Powell telling us how to go on for our  
21 freedom, that that's how I really got  
22 started.

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1 I think this is a subject that we  
2 ought to bring to our young people because  
3 every one of them gets it when they get to  
4 the seventh grade. And we need to tell them  
5 the other part of the story so that they are  
6 all informed and don't feel bashful or  
7 ashamed, but they can feel proud. But we  
8 have to build on that experience, and I think  
9 that's what your -- you have charged us with  
10 this legislation to do that.

11 MR. CONYERS: Ladies and gentlemen,  
12 I am pleased now to welcome Congressman Tony  
13 Hall to the podium for two reasons. One, he  
14 is a very able legislator. We've served  
15 together. He serves on the Rules Committee  
16 of the House which determines the regulations  
17 and the process under which all bills that go  
18 to the floor will be handled and it's a very  
19 influential committee.

20 Secondly of all, by being from  
21 Ohio, Dayton, Ohio, he and I work very  
22 closely, the two neighboring states, Toledo

1 is 54 miles from Detroit, we have a lot of  
2 people going back and forth.

3 But he is the first member of  
4 Congress to offer an additional resolution on  
5 the subject that brings us here today. I  
6 think we ought to give him a hand for that.  
7 Because if there is one thing that helps  
8 develop the educational and learning  
9 experience is that there be a variety of  
10 viewpoints brought forward on this subject.  
11 To have a white member of Congress coming  
12 forward and having given this thought from  
13 his perspective, I think it's very, very  
14 important. I'm happy to tell you that we  
15 work closely together, and we want to give  
16 him a warm welcome and hear him at this time,  
17 Congressman Tony Hall from Ohio.

18 MR. HALL: Thank you, Congressman  
19 Conyers, and I just thank you for your  
20 leadership on so many issues. Congresswoman  
21 Carrie Meek and Dr. Height and very  
22 distinguished members of this panel, I'm very



1 glad to be here with you and just share a few  
2 thoughts of my own.

3 I introduced a resolution in 1997  
4 saying that I felt that the government should  
5 apologize to African Americans for slavery.

6 I came about this many ways, but  
7 the short answer is that I heard an African  
8 American preacher and a white preacher on  
9 Martin Luther King Day, they were talking  
10 about the issue of slavery. They said did  
11 you know that our government, our government  
12 never has apologized. I thought, well, this  
13 is impossible. This is what the Civil War  
14 was about. This was about other things. We  
15 certainly have apologized.

16 Well, I went to the Congressional  
17 Research Library. I had them look at it,  
18 investigate, and they came back and told me  
19 we cannot find -- we cannot find an apology  
20 at all. From there I went to the library  
21 myself. I found it hard to believe that our  
22 government for all the laws that we passed

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1 that were pro-slavery, had never really  
2 apologized for something like this.

3 My hope was that the step would  
4 create a goodwill that we don't have and  
5 something that's needed to really address  
6 this tremendous race issue that plagues our  
7 country. I was hoping that would be taken in  
8 the spirit that it's offered, something  
9 between people, not something done in a court  
10 of law that triggers a responsibility to pay  
11 damages or penalties.

12 The issue of reparations, it's a  
13 complicated one, and I certainly don't have  
14 the answers. The majority of Americans came  
15 to this country after slavery ended. I heard  
16 from many people that they don't feel they  
17 owe anyone for something their families were  
18 not involved in. But I think, I believe that  
19 we should take a very serious look at  
20 reparations, and I support Congressman  
21 Conyers' suggestion of a blue ribbon panel to  
22 study it.

1 I would hope that it would consider  
2 among many things, investments in human  
3 capital for scholarships, for a museum like  
4 Congressman Lewis has proposed, for things  
5 that would improve the future of slaves'  
6 descendants. But before we can do that I  
7 think we need to talk honestly about slavery,  
8 and we need to correct the history books to  
9 say now that the policies that created and  
10 maintained slavery and the Jim Crow laws that  
11 were its legacy were wrong.

12 Slavery was a lot more than an  
13 atrocity committed by private individuals.  
14 Our Constitution, we didn't count them as  
15 whole people. We counted slaves as  
16 three-fifths of a person. In the 1850s our  
17 Supreme Court defined African Americans as  
18 property, and Congress let that stand. There  
19 are all kinds of minor laws and major laws  
20 and appropriations approved by Congress that  
21 strengthened the institution of slavery.

22 The history is glossed over in the

1 books or considered washed away by the Civil  
2 War. That's a roll call coming up. We've  
3 got 15 minutes. But the Emancipation  
4 Proclamation specifically permitted slavery  
5 to continue in Union-occupied portions of  
6 Louisiana, Virginia, West Virginia, and  
7 states that hadn't seceded. And Jim Crow  
8 laws that were slavery's legacy, and the  
9 ensured poverty and poor education of black  
10 children. That didn't end for a century  
11 after the Civil War ended.

12           Slavery severed the family and  
13 community links that are the source of many  
14 Americans' education and opportunity and  
15 wealth, and there have been too few  
16 generations between then and now for many  
17 African Americans to catch up.

18           A lot has happened in three years.  
19 There's been a lot of apologies. This is not  
20 precedent setting. The Pope apologized for  
21 his church's sin against the Jews. The  
22 British Prime Minister apologized for his

1 role in the Irish famine. The Benin  
2 president, President Kerekou, who I was with  
3 last year apologized to Africans for his role  
4 and their role in selling one another. There  
5 have been movies, news accounts: Our culture  
6 is much more focused on slavery and its  
7 legacy than it ever was in 1997.

8           The response to my proposal was  
9 very interesting. Polls found that African  
10 Americans supported it, and white Americans  
11 opposed it by 2 to 1 margins, but there was a  
12 lot of variation among each group. I was  
13 most heartened by the people like Clarence  
14 Page of the Chicago Tribune whose first  
15 reaction was why should we, but who came to  
16 the conclusion why shouldn't we.

17           My colleagues in the Congressional  
18 Black Caucus has generally been supportive,  
19 some more than others, and they seem to feel  
20 that this is not something they want to drag  
21 their white colleagues into, but it is  
22 something that we should initiate.

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1           Some don't really feel that it goes  
2 far enough, but white or black, congressmen  
3 and -women know that race is one of the  
4 biggest problems our country faces.

5           So, my conclusion, I just want to  
6 say that I feel very strong about this issue,  
7 that this is our government saying that we  
8 were part of this, slaves built the Capitol  
9 of this country which is not too far from  
10 where we're sitting right now. We counted  
11 slaves like property and like cattle. If we  
12 can apologize to Indians, Native Americans,  
13 something that we did last week, and we can  
14 apologize to Japanese Americans, and we can  
15 apologize for other things, all these  
16 precedents have some before us, why can't we  
17 do the simple thing of apologizing to  
18 descendants of slaves? It's a very simple  
19 thing, it's a very simple thing, but I think  
20 it has tremendous meaning.

21           I think we have to go back to the  
22 beginning, and the beginning starts with

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1 slaves and starts with that history of it,  
2 and there's a wound there that needs to be  
3 healed. I don't think it's going to happen  
4 this year. As a matter of fact, I know it's  
5 not going to happen, but some day we will do  
6 this. Thank you. Best wishes.

7 (Applause)

8 MS. AYATORO: I'd like to thank  
9 Congressman Tony Hall. We're going to go on  
10 with the panel. I'm not sure. Are you going  
11 to be able to come back? So we'd like to  
12 thank him. Why don't we give him another  
13 round of applause.

14 MR. HALL: Thanks.

15 MS. AYATORO: My name is Adjua  
16 Ayatoro, and Congressman Conyers has asked me  
17 to take over moderating the panel while he,  
18 Congresswoman Meek, and Congressman Tony Hall  
19 go and vote. They will be back, the two  
20 co-sponsors of this session.

21 I want to thank everyone for being  
22 here, and we have an excellent panel. The

1 next speaker that we would like to hear from  
2 is Ms. Lillian Kamura who is the past  
3 president of the Japanese American Citizen's  
4 League.

5 MS. KAMURA: It's my pleasure to be  
6 here to support the cause of black  
7 reparations, and as most of you know, that  
8 Japanese Americans have gone through this.  
9 It concluded not too long ago as we fought  
10 for an apology from the United States  
11 government and remuneration for being  
12 incarcerated during World War II when we were  
13 citizens of the United States and our  
14 constitutional rights were violated.

15 I think that what we can share is  
16 the process by which we went to get this, and  
17 it took us over about 15 years or better.  
18 It's really quite interesting. One of the  
19 reasons why we went the congressional  
20 commission route was because we are a very  
21 small minority and very few people in the  
22 United States knew about this violation

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1 because it's certainly not in the history  
2 books today. Maybe it's getting to be in the  
3 history books.

4           What we got was \$20,000 per  
5 individual who was incarcerated and survived  
6 the experience, and the cutoff date is they  
7 must have been alive on August 10, 1988 when  
8 President Reagan signed the bill into action.  
9 When the bill was passed there was no money  
10 attached to it, so it took is another two  
11 years to go back to Congress and have money  
12 appropriated because the commission had  
13 recommended that \$1.5 billion be set aside  
14 for this and it was going to be tough for us  
15 to get it under appropriations.

16           So Senator Inouye, our long-time  
17 Senator from Hawaii said that we should go  
18 after entitlement money, and this is  
19 something that you need to think about too,  
20 entitlement meaning that we didn't have to go  
21 back year after year, that that money was set  
22 aside until the last person was compensated.

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1                   Dumb of us to use white male  
2 actuarial tables to figure out how many  
3 survivors that we projected there would be,  
4 and we thought 60,000. It turned out to be  
5 better than 80,000. Part of the bill  
6 provided for an educational component, and  
7 that was set at \$50 million, but by the time  
8 that all these extra people, not extra  
9 people, but the people that we uncovered who  
10 were still alive and eligible for  
11 compensation, we only had \$5 million left for  
12 the educational component.

13                   That's kind of unfortunate because  
14 I think that that's the biggest thing that we  
15 can contribute is to make sure that people  
16 understand that this kind of action should  
17 never happen again, and we've got to keep on  
18 educating folks that this happened.  
19 Recently, or two years ago at Ellis Island we  
20 had an exhibit called America's Concentration  
21 Camp and it was put together by the Japanese  
22 American National Museum in Los Angeles.

1 They brought it to Ellis Island under a lot  
2 of difficulties because they had to ship the  
3 exhibits by boat over there.

4 One of the advantages of having it  
5 at Ellis Island, not just at the Japanese  
6 American Museum in Los Angeles, is because so  
7 many people visit Ellis Island. When we had  
8 folks go through that, they're from all over  
9 the world, and we've asked them to write  
10 their comments in a book and some of the  
11 visitors from other countries would say they  
12 couldn't believe that this happened in the  
13 greatest democracy in the world.

14 So I think we have to continue to  
15 struggle, and I think that our organization  
16 and the Japanese American people would join  
17 in your effort for this because it's a wrong  
18 that has to be righted.

19 MS. AYATORO: Thank you very much.  
20 Our next speaker is the Honorable Derrick  
21 Hale, State Representative from Michigan.

22 MR. HALE: Thank you, and God bless

1 everyone today. I would like also to thank  
2 the panel for taking the time out of their  
3 busy schedules to participate in this.

4 I also would like to acknowledge my  
5 Congressman, John Conyers, for leading the  
6 fight on this. I'm a Representative in  
7 Congressman Conyers' district.

8 I'd also like to acknowledge Ed  
9 Vaughn who's a state member of the House of  
10 Representatives which I serve on, also his  
11 good buddy and companion, Claude Anderson,  
12 who are very instrumental in me for learning  
13 the process on this issue.

14 I also would like to acknowledge  
15 Joanne Watson who is the mother of the  
16 reparations movement in the city of Detroit  
17 who also is a family church member of mine  
18 who always watches me, and if I'm wrong she  
19 always pulls me to the side and pulls me by  
20 the ear.

21 I also would like to acknowledge  
22 Martha G. Scott from Detroit/Highland Park

1 who is also a fighter for the city of  
2 Detroit. And a new member, Mary Waters, who  
3 will be coming to the legislature in January.

4 When we talk about reparations and  
5 how we get there and the whole circumstances  
6 on it, we can go from A to Z on it, but we  
7 have to start asking ourselves this question:  
8 Why? It's also like a pain and suffering.  
9 It's the right thing to do. I think that  
10 African Americans in this whole -- our whole  
11 existence in America, we have been able to be  
12 misguided by other folks.

13 If you fall down -- for an example,  
14 if you fall down and scrape your knee and it  
15 bleeds, it hurts. But for some reason or  
16 another, when African Americans hurt, other  
17 people tell us, no, it's all right, it don't  
18 hurt, but you know deep down inside you're  
19 hurting. I think that our whole existence in  
20 America has been surrounded and been  
21 dominated by that premise. I think that when  
22 we deal with issues like this that we should

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1 not be ashamed to talk about it, and I think  
2 we need to overcome that.

3           Then just there's a whole lot of  
4 things that we can do, but as I was reading  
5 *The Debt* by Randall Robinson, it came to a  
6 point where I'll just read you a short  
7 passage that Marcus Garvey had said, "The  
8 greatest stumbling block in the way of  
9 progress -- and the races invariably come  
10 from within the race itself." That's been a  
11 dynamic that the African American experience  
12 we've been dealing with for a number of  
13 years. I think we need to step up to the  
14 plate and to deal with that.

15           When you're dealing with  
16 reparations and how we get there, John  
17 Conyers has been there and a number of other  
18 individuals trying to address the issue, we  
19 have to learn how we get there and we have to  
20 provide mechanisms and solutions to the  
21 issue. Two things that I did on the state  
22 level was I introduced two bills on

1 reparations through the Michigan House of  
2 Representatives that will provide a tax  
3 credit for reparations. This is a legitimate  
4 and procedural method in which reparations  
5 can be allocated to African Americans.

6 Now, if you talk about or examine  
7 your current legislatures or even on the  
8 federal level, when we want to pay someone  
9 back just in case -- my governor, John  
10 Engler, when he wants to pay back his cronies  
11 or the people that contribute to the  
12 Republican Party, he provides them with tax  
13 credits, tax breaks, to pay for their  
14 political contributions.

15 One of the things that we were able  
16 to do in the Michigan House of  
17 Representatives that really gave me this  
18 idea, one, we passed some legislation  
19 with 110 votes that would allow people who  
20 were Holocaust victims, Jewish Holocaust  
21 victims, to provide them with a tax credit or  
22 tax amnesty, if they would receive payments

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1 from the German government they wouldn't have  
2 to pay taxes on it.

3 Then another bill that we  
4 introduced and which we voted on, Martha and  
5 myself and Ed which we voted no on was we  
6 eliminated the single business tax in the  
7 state of Michigan. For 23 years, big  
8 business in the state of Michigan would have  
9 to assume or to pay a tax to our general  
10 fund. Each year that would accumulate up  
11 to -- well, each year it's \$200 million, but  
12 over that 23-year period Michigan is going to  
13 lose \$2.7 billion over that 23-year period.

14 So when I introduced my legislation  
15 on tax credits, one bill deals with a tax  
16 credit of \$1,000 for 10 years. Well, then my  
17 second bill that caused a lot of uproar in  
18 Michigan and throughout the country, we came  
19 up with a number of \$16,500 a year, and that  
20 accrued on the interest from 135 years ago  
21 and the premise of 40 acres and a mule  
22 calculates to that. Over that 20-year period



1 in which the bill would be in effect, that  
2 came up to \$330,000.

3 But that's to some degree just a  
4 scratch on the surface. I started to receive  
5 my hate mail, calls saying why did you think  
6 of this. Some people -- I was surprised,  
7 there were some people of European descent  
8 that supported it on radio talk shows, they  
9 talked about it, and how did you come up with  
10 this. It was quite a trying period for me  
11 when I introduced this because I wasn't  
12 really used to all the attention that was  
13 raised on this particular issue as it relates  
14 to the death threats.

15 But the tax credit is a way that we  
16 could start addressing this issue and to come  
17 up with a real strategy on how to do it. If  
18 we could come up with the Marhsall Plan to  
19 rebuild Europe after World War II, we need to  
20 come up with a Marshall Plan for reparations.  
21 Thank you.

22 MS. AYATORO: Thank you very much.

1 We're going to go to the gentleman that he in  
2 fact has honored as one of his colleagues and  
3 perhaps mentors in Michigan, and I'd like to  
4 introduce to you Ed Vaughn who has been an  
5 inspiration to many of us in the reparations  
6 movement.

7 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you very much.  
8 It is certainly a pleasure for me to be here,  
9 and my colleague in the Michigan House of  
10 Representatives, Derrick Hale, has already  
11 introduced Representative Martha Scott and  
12 the Representative-Elect from Detroit, Mary  
13 Waters, and I'm pleased to be here before my  
14 congressman, John Conyers. I go between  
15 Conyers and Kilpatrick in terms of Congress  
16 representation from time to time, so I've had  
17 them both, but certainly is a pleasure to be  
18 here, and with Carrie Meek, Joanne Watson,  
19 Dr. Dorothy Height who has always been an  
20 inspiration to me and so many others here,  
21 and just to people here who are here for the  
22 caucus weekend. I'm so happy to be here with

1 you.

2 I represent the 4th Legislative  
3 District in Detroit. We have about 85,000  
4 people in my district. In addition to that,  
5 I am the national fund-raiser for the NCOBRA  
6 Legal Fund. NCOBRA means the National  
7 Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in  
8 America, and our slogan is "Reparations  
9 Now" -- "come hell or highway." I add that  
10 part.

11 We make it very clear that  
12 reparations is not a handout. It's not a  
13 handout. It's a debt owed. This man from  
14 George Mason University, Walter Williams,  
15 wrote a real goofy article in the newspaper  
16 that was printed in the "Detroit Free Press."  
17 By the way, I have copies of the article he  
18 wrote, and I have copies of the answer that I  
19 gave him because I tore him apart and called  
20 him some names. You don't call folks names,  
21 but I did refer to him as a house negro.

22 But in any event, I wrote this

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1 because he said that without slavery many  
2 blacks would be worse off today. I mean, I  
3 was hurt. I thought I'd never hear anyone  
4 say that slavery was good for us, but he said  
5 it, and I think we need to know that. He  
6 said it, and that's why I called him that  
7 name because that's what he is.

8 But in any event, we are going  
9 after through my bill in the Michigan House  
10 of Representatives which is a bill that is a  
11 state companion to HR 40 which is a study  
12 bill. We're going after them through that  
13 method. Through NCOBRA we also are moving  
14 towards a lawsuit. Our attorney of record,  
15 Adjua Ayatoro is here also chairing this  
16 meeting, and we are very serious about the  
17 issue of reparations.

18 Just like my colleague Derrick  
19 Hale, I've been getting the hate mail too.  
20 They called me all kinds of names. So it's  
21 all right. Just spell my name right. So it  
22 doesn't bother me because I'm not scared,

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1 never have been scared. I was born in  
2 Alabama. That's where the cotton grows tall  
3 and the folks say y'all, and we were no way  
4 meek down in Alabama. We were serious. No  
5 matter what anybody tell you, folks tell you  
6 from the South, we had the Deacons for  
7 Defense and we had a whole lot of other folks  
8 who didn't take no funny stuff down there.  
9 So we are very serious about fighting and  
10 struggling.

11 But we're going to continue this  
12 struggle. We have an economic development  
13 commission because people are always asking  
14 me, saying, well, where the money going to  
15 come from, or that money left a long time  
16 ago. I said, no, we do the money trail. We  
17 know where the money is. It's the same  
18 money. It didn't leave. The money never  
19 left. Now, the slave masters are dead, and  
20 of course our dear ancestors are dead, but  
21 the money ain't dead. That's the same money  
22 that's still being used this very day.

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1           We can trace it into the insurance  
2 companies, we can trace it into a whole lot  
3 of other entities that are using the same  
4 money that our ancestors died as a result of  
5 their degradation. That same money is being  
6 used to this very day. So we know how to do  
7 the money trail. So it's not anything that  
8 is there -- but we do -- I say to all of  
9 those, and there may be some in the audience  
10 who are African Americans who don't want  
11 reparations. Make sure you give us your name  
12 and address because you ain't going to get  
13 nothing because we'll make sure you don't.  
14 Make sure you do that now, because there are  
15 a lot of you who don't want that, so we want  
16 to make sure we get your name down.

17           I was in Florida when the Seminoles  
18 got their reparations. You know Seminoles  
19 didn't take no stuff. They still haven't  
20 completed their peace treaty with the U.S.  
21 government. They're still claiming half of  
22 the coast of Florida, and Osola (?) was one

1 of my dear heroes, great Osola, the Seminole  
2 chieftain.

3 But anyway, half the folks in  
4 Florida who said there was something else  
5 became Seminoles all of a sudden. So we know  
6 a whole lot of folks in America are going to  
7 be very proud to be black when we get this  
8 money, because we are going to get it. So we  
9 have an economic development commission that  
10 deals with that issue NCOBRA, the National  
11 Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in  
12 America.

13 My great-grandmother, Joanne Hogan,  
14 was a slave and they told us the stories  
15 about her and her older sister as they cooked  
16 for a white family on the plantation. They  
17 would fry chicken, and the chicken that they  
18 would fry, the slave master and his family  
19 would eat the chicken and then they would  
20 have a big plate of bones after they had  
21 eaten, and they would give those bones to my  
22 great-grandmother and to her sister and they

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1 were supposed to eat the bones.

2           Well, my great-grandmother and her  
3 sister, her older sister, carved a hole in  
4 the floor next to the stove, and so the  
5 little sister would go under the house. So  
6 when she would fly a drumstick for the slave  
7 master, she would take the other drumstick  
8 that she had fried and stick it through the  
9 little hole for her sister under the house.  
10 So when the dinner was over for the slave  
11 master and they were given the plate of  
12 bones, they thanked the slave master for the  
13 bones and they went under the house and they  
14 ate the real chicken.

15           This is my last part of this story  
16 because when my mother told me the story, my  
17 mother is 90 now, she lives in Alabama, when  
18 she told me the story I remember that during  
19 World War II my mother did some of the same  
20 thing. They told all of us in Alabama, poor  
21 people, black and white, if you were poor,  
22 that all of the prime beef had gone to war.



1 But my mother's boss man, my mother was a  
2 cook in a restaurant, he ate prime beef every  
3 night, and poor people, black and white, had  
4 to eat horse meat.

5           They gave you red stamps to buy the  
6 meat with. Those of you who are a little  
7 older, you know you had red stamps for meat  
8 and blue stamps for canned goods. Well, my  
9 mother saw her boss eating prime beef every  
10 night, and so she would wrap up a few of  
11 those big fat prime steaks and put them in  
12 the garbage can, and I would come out and  
13 take out the garbage. I would come down and  
14 take out the garbage. So we ate prime steaks  
15 all during World War II. I just want to let  
16 you know that.

17           So we're a very ingenious family,  
18 and we're very strong people, and the slogan  
19 of NCOBRA which is my slogan also,  
20 Reparations Now. Thank you.

21                   (Applause)

22           MR. CONYERS: You can see why

1 there's so much activity in the state of  
2 Michigan can't you? Let's give great  
3 colleague and my state representative Ed  
4 Vaughn another round of applause, State  
5 Representative Ed Vaughn.

6 I'm now pleased to call upon the  
7 newly elected president of the National Bar  
8 Association, Yvette L. Simmons.

9 We haven't had a woman president  
10 there for a long time, but she from Florida  
11 has agreed to take on this daunting task for  
12 one year. The National Bar Association has  
13 never been stronger than it is at the present  
14 time. I'm pleased to bring her forward,  
15 President Yvette L. Simmons.

16 MS. SIMMONS: Thank you very much.  
17 This is a special honor for me because I have  
18 so much respect for Representative Conyers,  
19 and I am so excited that he will be the  
20 leader of the Judiciary Committee next year.  
21 We're going to do what we need to do to make  
22 sure that happens.

1           Representative Conyers is one that  
2 does not let go. I did a little bit of  
3 research for this panel and I looked and  
4 discovered that around 1968 after Martin  
5 Luther King's death he introduced a bill to  
6 make it a national holiday, Martin Luther  
7 King's birthday a national holiday. It  
8 took 15 years for that holiday to take place,  
9 but it took place in 1983.

10           My research also told me that  
11 in 1989 he introduced the first bill for the  
12 Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for  
13 African Americans Act, and it's 11 years now  
14 since that's happened, but he still has  
15 about 4 more years. So we know at the rate  
16 that he's going and listening to this panel  
17 that certainly that will become a reality,  
18 and it will become a reality in our immediate  
19 lifetime.

20           The National Bar Association  
21 certainly has taken on the issue of  
22 reparations. In 1999, last year, at our

1 convention in Philadelphia we passed a  
2 resolution endorsing the need for  
3 reparations, and you have on this panel so  
4 many people that have worked so many years  
5 and have so much history that will be  
6 provided to you.

7           What I thought that I would do was  
8 to look at it from a remedy standpoint. For  
9 instance, you hear the arguments we can't  
10 tell who should be getting this money, I  
11 mean, the people are dead. Then I got to  
12 thinking about it. I said that when you have  
13 a drug arrest and they seize all of the  
14 property and whether or not the mother has it  
15 or the cousin or whoever has that property,  
16 if they can trace that money to that  
17 property, they take that property.

18           So you've heard on the panel today  
19 that you can trace the monies that the people  
20 in power have to the days where we gave free  
21 labor in order for them to gain the resources  
22 they needed in order for them to get to the

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1 point that they are. The government can  
2 seize that property and then give it to us.

3 Another thing too is that you've  
4 heard comments or suggestions about our  
5 getting a lump sum of money, and I -- and  
6 that's good too, and I agree with that. But  
7 more importantly I'm reminded of that quote,  
8 and I'm paraphrasing it, if you give a person  
9 a fish, that person would have fish for a  
10 day. But if you teach a person to fish, that  
11 person will have fish for a lifetime. Put  
12 the funds in trust so that you can educate  
13 your people.

14 If you educate African Americans  
15 and there -- I mean, we have been -- we have  
16 been some of the most creative people in the  
17 world. If you give us a tennis racket, we  
18 win tournaments. If you give us a golf club,  
19 we win. If you give us a basketball -- if  
20 you -- whatever you give us, we can take it  
21 as long as you train us. So put that money  
22 in trust and you don't have to worry about

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1 welfare or anything else. Because ultimately  
2 we are people who survive and we will  
3 survive. So put those funds in trust.

4 But there are a number of ways  
5 that -- I mean, this country has given  
6 reparations in Rosewood and in the state of  
7 Florida. Folks receive reparations. There's  
8 nothing wrong with that. You heard  
9 Representative Hall talk about we have not  
10 even received an apology. I guess until the  
11 majority can recognize that by the year 2050  
12 we're going to be the majority, people of  
13 color, that at this point now it's time for  
14 them to face up that they have to treat as  
15 people. And if we don't ultimately get the  
16 reparations that we want, as long as we can  
17 keep the conversation going and remember the  
18 legal components of this thing too as well as  
19 the emotional components, then I feel that we  
20 should be okay. Thank you.

21 (Applause)

22 MR. CONYERS: Yvette Simmons, we

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1 thank you very much for your contribution.  
2 And I want to now turn to one who has been  
3 working in this for many years. She is an  
4 attorney. She's worked on the Hill. She's  
5 worked with civil liberties organizations.  
6 She is now the Legal Chair of NCOBRA, and I'd  
7 like you to personally welcome attorney  
8 Ms. Adjua Ayatoro for her presentation.  
9 Adjua?

10 MS. AYATORO: Thank you. I am very  
11 appreciative of Congressman Conyers  
12 personally because of his steadfastness on  
13 this issue. He has introduced and  
14 reintroduced and reintroduced HR-40 -- a  
15 couple of years it wasn't called HR-40 but it  
16 was the same bill, since 1989. And he has  
17 consistently worked with NCOBRA, an  
18 organization that a number of our other  
19 organizations including the National  
20 Conference of Black Lawyers, an organization  
21 that I was at one time the leader of,  
22 cofounded in 1987 at the call of Emorio

1 Bedele (?).

2           Congressman Conyers has a great  
3 deal of respect from NCOBRA for a number of  
4 reasons, but one most important is that when  
5 he first drafted HR-40, before he introduced  
6 it he didn't assume the arrogance of power  
7 and just introduce a bill. He sent that bill  
8 to a number of groups I'm sure. But one of  
9 those was NCOBRA, and he asked NCOBRA to look  
10 at it and to comment. Now that doesn't mean  
11 he accepted all our comments, but he did it.  
12 And I think that regardless of the struggles  
13 and the debates we had over the bill at that  
14 time, the differences that some of us felt  
15 because the bill didn't just say, Give us  
16 reparations, he has earned the respect of  
17 NCOBRA. And I want to say on behalf of  
18 NCOBRA, on behalf of our legal strategies  
19 commission, thank you, Congressman Conyers.

20           It's indeed a pleasure in some way  
21 to be on this panel again. It also feels to  
22 me like it's a responsibility and a duty.



1 It's a responsibility and a duty because we  
2 haven't gotten our reparations yet, and it's  
3 a responsibility and our duty that -- my duty  
4 that until we do, anytime I'm asked to  
5 present to you if I can physically do I will.  
6 Because it is you that we must depend upon to  
7 actually help us win reparations.

8           Congressman Conyers can introduce a  
9 bill, NCOBRA can be out on the streets, we  
10 can develop litigation which we're working  
11 on, but unless you in the audience speak to  
12 it, unless you in the audience write your  
13 congressperson whether he or she sits on the  
14 CBC or not, unless you speak out and say we  
15 know that reparations must be given Africans  
16 in America, African Americans, New Africans,  
17 black Americans, whatever you choose to call  
18 us, unless you do that, unless you do your  
19 part in raising up this demand whether you be  
20 African, African American, or white or Asian  
21 or whatever your ancestry is, then in fact  
22 we're going to have to continue to have these

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1 forums.

2           We're going to have to continue to  
3 beat the drum. But it must become a call  
4 that a critical mass of people on and accept.  
5 We don't need unanimity. One of the things  
6 that I want to disavow us of is this view  
7 that somehow every African American or every  
8 black person, whatever we call ourselves,  
9 must embrace reparations in order for us to  
10 win. That's ridiculous.

11           We've not won any victory by 100  
12 percent -- by unanimity. If we look at the  
13 Japanese American struggle, I'm sure  
14 Ms. Kamura would support the position that  
15 that there was not unanimity in that  
16 community. I'm sure there is not unanimity  
17 in any community that strives for and works  
18 for something.

19           But we do need those of you who say  
20 you support it, say you believe in it to do  
21 more than come to these forums. We need you  
22 to get out there and speak to it and work on

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1 it. So that is what I will charge you with.

2 One of the things that I wanted to  
3 do in the few minutes that I have is to raise  
4 up some of the questions that people tend to  
5 ask, and some of our speakers have already  
6 addressed some. But one is that it's been  
7 too long.

8 Well, first of all, if we look at  
9 reparations as simply payment for  
10 enslavement, there may be -- I don't think  
11 so -- but, you know, we can arguably say  
12 there is some validity to that point. But  
13 slavery did not end. Slavery ended only in  
14 the sense of the law that was passed,  
15 the 13th Amendment, the so-called  
16 Emancipation Proclamation and others, that  
17 said that we were "freed."

18 But the slavery didn't end. If we  
19 look at some of the work of Ron Walters, we  
20 know that up until the late-1950s there's  
21 evidence of peonage continuing in some  
22 Southern states. Peonage is a form os

1 slavery.

2           We also know though, those of us  
3 who are up on the data in terms of the status  
4 of African Americans compared to whites, we  
5 know that that gap in all areas particularly  
6 the economy continues. And Dr. Claude  
7 Anderson I'm sure will talk with you about  
8 some of that information. I don't want to  
9 take his piece.

10           But we also can look at other  
11 systems. We can look at what continues to be  
12 what we call a dual-punishment system, the  
13 system that was born in slavery. The system  
14 says that black folk can commit a certain act  
15 and be punished by the most severe  
16 punishments. White folk can commit that same  
17 act and get, you know, a little slap on the  
18 hand, if that.

19           We look at our criminal punishment  
20 system, we look at the death penalty, we look  
21 at the crack and power cocaine laws, we look  
22 at the use of the punishment system to

1   imprison some of our political leadership.  
2   We look at that system and we say this is a  
3   continuation of slavery.

4               We look at the health system. We  
5   look at the fact that we disproportionately  
6   suffer from all major chronic diseases. That  
7   is because of several things. It is because  
8   of the socializations that many of us got in  
9   enslavement, the diets we eat. But most  
10  particularly, see, we didn't want -- you  
11  know, people want to put that on us, well,  
12  you choose the wrong foods. But studies have  
13  come out in the more recent years to talk  
14  about the discrimination that is heaped upon  
15  us in the health system.

16              The doctors do not take, for  
17  example, the complaints of chest pains from  
18  black Americans, most particularly black  
19  women Americans, as they do from white  
20  Americans. That doctors don't give us the  
21  same kinds of advice as it relates to many of  
22  the health issues because of racism, because

1 of discrimination people will call it, but  
2 racism.

3           This is born of slavery. This is  
4 not disconnected from slavery. We are owed  
5 reparations today not because of what --  
6 simply because of what happened to our  
7 ancestors, but what continues to happen to  
8 us. We are owed it. We are owed it because  
9 we were paid discriminatory wages. We are  
10 owed it because our ancestors who were unpaid  
11 have left a legacy to us that says we just  
12 close that gap that we experienced, but we  
13 must do it not simply for us, not simply for  
14 our children, but to avenge, to vindicate,  
15 and to say that our ancestors have not worked  
16 for nothing and died for nothing; that we  
17 will bring it all the way back.

18           Lastly, and I know my time is up,  
19 but one of the things that I want to speak to  
20 very quickly is this thing that people keep  
21 telling me. I was interviewed or talked just  
22 recently to an ABC reporter who is here

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1 today. Other people have raised this point,  
2 and we need to talk about this. People are  
3 throwing up what I call ridiculous and what  
4 she called -- in fact, I don't know if I  
5 should say she called it -- ridiculous kinds  
6 of arguments, but we must be ready to respond  
7 to it.

8 One argument that we've all  
9 probably heard is we are better off as  
10 African Americans here today in the United  
11 States than if they had left us in Africa.  
12 Well, you know, don't just let your blood  
13 pressure go up on that one.

14 Let's look at it. Let's look the  
15 history. Let's look at what Conrad Worrill  
16 may talk about, but what we talked about this  
17 past weekend at our conference in Atlanta, is  
18 the fact if you look back to when did slavery  
19 in the slave trade so-called start in Africa  
20 and then you look at the destabilization of  
21 Africa, the condition of Africa today is not  
22 disconnected from the Atlantic slavery trade,

1 it goes hand and hand to it.

2           They robbed and raped Africa like  
3 they robbed and raped all of the ancestors  
4 that came over here. That rape is not --  
5 they do not have clean hands on the condition  
6 of Africa.

7           I'd like to leave you therefore  
8 with again the charge that I started with.  
9 We must win -- we will win reparations. Let  
10 me start off with that. We're going to get  
11 it. Okay? And it's going to take many  
12 forms. It's not just a check. It is  
13 community development, health care,  
14 education. But we are going to win faster if  
15 everyone in this audience when you leave here  
16 today do more than just say I went to a good  
17 workshop. That John Conyers is on point.  
18 That speaker, that speaker, that speaker.

19           But when you leave here, you do  
20 something to win it. You talk to your  
21 family. You talk to your minister. You talk  
22 to your children. You talk to the banker.

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1 You talk to anyone that you know. You write  
2 your congressman. We're going to win because  
3 you are on the wagon with us and the train is  
4 rolling and we've got it. Thank you.

5 MR. CONYERS: Thank you very much,  
6 Adjua. I would like to recognize another  
7 state representative from Michigan that we  
8 claim with great pride, and that is the  
9 Honorable Treet Reeves who's just come in.  
10 Thank you very much.

11 We should also all of us be  
12 prepared to deal with the scams that  
13 inevitably arise around any cause, and one of  
14 them is that there are advertisements asking  
15 people to pay a fee to -- that reparations  
16 money is already available and if you send in  
17 a fee. Has anybody heard that scam besides  
18 me?

19 Well, we all have a duty to make  
20 sure that we disabuse anybody from that kind  
21 of activity, and make sure that none of our  
22 supporters of this very sacred movement

1 doesn't get pulled into any kind of scam like  
2 that.

3           The lady that let us off,  
4 Dr. Height this afternoon, talked about the  
5 importance of education and study and  
6 research. And it's a curious thing how these  
7 things begin to develop. On September 12th,  
8 two days ago this week in the House of  
9 Representatives, we had a hearing on the  
10 bill, House Concurrent Resolution 368, which  
11 would recognize the slave laborers who worked  
12 on construction of the United States Capitol.  
13 Can you believe that we just had that  
14 long-awaited discussion in which it was a  
15 bipartisan effort and it passed  
16 overwhelmingly?

17           But wouldn't you know, another  
18 variation of this subject raised? And by the  
19 way, slaves helped build the Capitol, the  
20 White House, and many of the federal  
21 buildings in Washington, D.C. And this is  
22 now coming to light. The records are coming

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1 forward at break-neck speed.

2 I remember that Randall Robinson in  
3 his book *The Debt* remarked, or his wife  
4 remarked to him, that in all the depictions  
5 of the constructions and the people that  
6 contributed, there were none of anyone of  
7 African descent. And so we are now rushing  
8 forward with records and documents to detail  
9 that free blacks and people enslaved both  
10 made massive contributions. Not just as  
11 laborers, but as skilled artisans to the very  
12 places that some 26 million people come to  
13 the nation's Capitol to visit every year.

14 But listen to this part of this  
15 debate that you should know about. Here it  
16 is over here. So all of the dialogue  
17 tonight, this is reading from the  
18 Congressional Record of September 12th, so  
19 all of the dialogue tonight has been very,  
20 very important in beginning to recognize and  
21 bring forward as scholars are, as forums are  
22 going in our universities in which we're

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1 bringing up the records of the slaves, of  
2 their travels across the waters, of the  
3 insurance records and a lot of other factual  
4 materials.

5           So it seems to me that we're moving  
6 inextricably into the question of how we  
7 recognize and study the question of  
8 reparations as may affect them. I could not  
9 imagine this conversation going on tonight  
10 without us examining what we do in the  
11 preparation of a commission to study the  
12 history of slaves and their descendants in  
13 terms of their contributions and where we  
14 might fit into the picture presently.

15           And that and some other remarks  
16 were made by myself on the floor in which I  
17 introduced the concept of reparations. Since  
18 we're remembering all these contributions, we  
19 were about to have a discussion,  
20 Representative Vaughn, in which we just  
21 recognized all this. Now I'm going to be  
22 sitting on the floor and we're going to talk

1 about how we found that they've done all this  
2 work, and we had the subject of reparations  
3 introduced into this discussion.

4 Now we have along with the question  
5 of education, we have this young, young man,  
6 Dennis Rogers, who heads the National African  
7 American Student Association and he has as  
8 its president organized students from  
9 throughout the nation to strengthen their  
10 levels of activism, leadership, and  
11 self-determination on social justice and  
12 economic issues. I'm pleased to recognize  
13 the youngest man on this panel, Mr. Dennis  
14 Rogers.

15 MR. ROGERS: Thank you very much,  
16 Chairman John Conyers. This is an honor and  
17 a pleasure to be here with you. I'd also  
18 like to acknowledge all of the elders in the  
19 room. This is a bit preemptive in terms of  
20 me speaking at this time, but I'd like to ask  
21 Dr. Height specifically and elders above my  
22 age may I have the permission to speak. Yes.

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1 Thank you very much.

2 With that in mind, the reason that  
3 I'm going at this time, and I do apologize,  
4 is because I am a student activist, and  
5 that's a big S along with a big A, and I have  
6 a statistics class that begins at about 3:30.  
7 And so unfortunately I'll have to depart.  
8 But I thank you for this honor and this  
9 opportunity.

10 In short, Congressman Conyers, my  
11 presentation will be a brief history in  
12 addition to a laundry list for students to  
13 follow in terms of how students can help to  
14 continue to energize this movement that  
15 Dr. Conrad Worrill has kept alive, that Baba  
16 M. -- I want to say Baba Oberdele (?) has  
17 kept alive, that Mama Adjua Ayatoro has kept  
18 alive, that here in Washington, D.C., my Mama  
19 right here that gave me "Through the Door of  
20 No Return" has kept alive, Mama Mary  
21 Killingham here in Washington.

22 In short, when you look at the film

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1 "Through the Door of No Return," now,  
2 students, I'm going to give everybody  
3 homework. When you look through the film,  
4 "The Door of No Return," it talks about  
5 connecting the dots, connecting back to  
6 Africa so you understand our origin. If you  
7 look at Congressman Micky Leland, a U.S.  
8 Congressman from Houston, Texas, who is an  
9 advocate for equitable U.S. and Africa  
10 relations; when you look at Moshoot  
11 Abeola (?) who was elected president of  
12 Africa, but understand that he was the  
13 chairman of the reparations committee for the  
14 Organization of African Unity; when you look  
15 at Congressman -- Commerce Secretary Ron  
16 Brown who was actually going to Africa  
17 unfortunately when he met his demise in order  
18 to again create a more equitable relationship  
19 between Africa and the United States of  
20 America, you have to understand it is  
21 something to reconnecting with Africa.  
22 Slavery, the extrapolation from

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1 Africa of people. The incarceration in  
2 dungeons before they even left the continent.  
3 The middle passage. It's considered the  
4 great ma'afa (?), the great suffering. We  
5 can't even tell the stories of what happened  
6 in slavery, nor the middle passage.

7           The slavery experience itself with  
8 the stolen legacy, a stolen culture, a stolen  
9 religion, stolen family bonds, and in a lot  
10 of ways a stolen psyche, that as sister Adjua  
11 Ayatoro laid out leads to some of our  
12 behavior as well as us not getting proper  
13 care from health care professionals, from the  
14 legislative process here in the Nation's  
15 Capital.

16           When we look at new approaches, how  
17 can we undergird as young people what's  
18 taking place on the national stage as it  
19 relates to reparation, HR-40 and the like?  
20 Spike Lee at the end of each movie, he has  
21 this big, strong black hand knocks down a  
22 hammer and what does it say, 40 acres and a

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1 mule. Spike Lee is using that icon to  
2 reconnect young people to the concept of 40  
3 acres and a mule.

4 I went on the Internet, Congressman  
5 Conyers, several nights ago and I found  
6 92,787 finds when I used the search engine  
7 Alta Vista on the Internet of reparations.  
8 So I encourage young people and all of us to  
9 educate ourselves using this new technology.

10 In addition, well, let me just be  
11 short and say this is nothing new. If you go  
12 on the reparations Alta Vista site and you  
13 search, you find that the annual gross  
14 domestic product of the United States today  
15 is \$7.66 trillion, Germany \$1.7 trillion.  
16 Did that money come out of osmosis? The  
17 countries are built on the labor of African  
18 people.

19 When you also look at the history  
20 of reparations, I'll quote the book "Black  
21 Reparations Now Part I, 40 Acres," written by  
22 Dorothy Benton Lewis (?), a member of the

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1 Black Radical Congress, she lays out the  
2 history of reparations payments. And she  
3 lays out that in fact in 1990 the U.S.  
4 paid 1.2 billion to Asian Americans which we  
5 just heard from your fellow panelist.

6 She also lays out that in 1986 the  
7 U.S. paid millions based on the 1836 treaty  
8 to the Ottawas of Michigan, and the list goes  
9 on and on. What is the homework for  
10 students? What can students do to help  
11 undergird this movement? In short, students,  
12 include in your homework the dialogue on  
13 reparations, in your term papers, in your  
14 final exams, in your creative projects, in  
15 your films, in your shorts, in your screen  
16 plays. Utilize campus radio and newspapers  
17 to uplift the issue of reparations.

18 What about the hip hop sessions  
19 that you have? What about homecomings that  
20 are coming up now at historically black  
21 colleges and universities? What about the  
22 Bayou Classic in New Orleans? In addition to

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1 partying and having a good time, we need to  
2 be talking about reparations, young people.

3 Listen to Mose Def (?), Taliz  
4 Khalid (?), Day of Prayers, Black Star Lines.  
5 These are artists that are laying out in  
6 their lyrics the concept of reparations. Al  
7 Gore is coming to your campus. He'll be at  
8 Howard University this Saturday. The  
9 students at Howard need to raise the  
10 questions to the presidential candidate Al  
11 Gore what about reparations. They need to  
12 raise the question to the presidential  
13 candidate George Bush what about reparations.

14 Every congressional district in  
15 this nation has colleges and universities,  
16 high schools, junior high schools, elementary  
17 schools. You need to raise the issue of  
18 reparations. This is an election year.

19 In closing, Tupak Shakur, that  
20 great, eloquent poet, said this, I sold 5  
21 million albums. Snoop sold 2 million. We  
22 got 7 million votes. We're going to turn

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1 this political thing on its head. Young  
2 people, you need to register, you need to  
3 vote, and you need to bring up the issues of  
4 reparations. Thank you very much.

5 (Applause)

6 MR. CONYERS: Dennis Rogers, you  
7 raised a very important issue of the use of  
8 telecommunications technology. We've got to  
9 be using that computer, folks, getting on  
10 that Web, and pulling up all this material  
11 because there's new discoveries of research  
12 and history that are coming out all the time  
13 and I'd like very much for all of us young  
14 and old to follow the admonition of staying  
15 wired in on this new technology that's so  
16 available and important to us all.

17 MR. ROGERS: Thank you very much.

18 MR. CONYERS: You're more than  
19 welcome. You've done a good job. Give him  
20 another round of applause. He's the hope of  
21 the future.

22 One of the things I've been looking

1 forward to in my career is finding out how to  
2 motivate young people, and I am open for any  
3 suggestions that anybody has after this  
4 meeting.

5 But some young people see the  
6 challenge and really begin to respond to it.  
7 They understand intuitively. Their home  
8 training, their studies, have been  
9 incorporated into their belief system so they  
10 realize that they can begin to make a  
11 difference and become important in shaping  
12 their own future even in their youth. And  
13 that's the kind of spirit and motivation that  
14 we want to impart to all of our young people,  
15 the gifted ones, that ones that have always  
16 been on the right track, but also those young  
17 people who may have made a mistake or two or  
18 brought up in an environment that didn't give  
19 them that kind of feeling of confidence and  
20 understanding that the world was theirs to  
21 make what they will of it.

22 So on behalf of all of us who are

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1 trying to bring young people into this new  
2 century, this new century of technology, we  
3 are very grateful for the president of the  
4 National African American Student  
5 Organization.

6 Now, Congresswoman Carrie Meek of  
7 Florida takes this one step further because  
8 she has a son who serves in the state  
9 legislature. So her training has paid off  
10 even as we speak. He is being groomed for  
11 higher things, and there is no one that all  
12 of us in the Congress respects more is Carrie  
13 Meek of Florida who serves with such great  
14 distinction on the Appropriations Committee.

15 This is one that we've come to to  
16 see about getting funding for our programs.  
17 When you're on the Appropriations Committee  
18 you divide the bread up. That's who gets  
19 what comes out of appropriations. And she  
20 serves with great distinction on two  
21 subcommittees on the Appropriations  
22 Committee, and we're delighted to have her

1 with us now. Let's welcome the Honorable  
2 Carrie Meek of Florida.

3 MS. MEEK: Thank you.

4 MR. CONYERS: My cosponsor for  
5 today.

6 MS. MEEK: Thank you, Mister  
7 Chairman. I feel strangely blessed being  
8 here today -- I came to act as sort of a  
9 cosponsor and to sit next to the chairman  
10 today and to introduce the people who are on  
11 the panel.

12 But I want you to know I'm getting  
13 more than that. I'm sitting next to history.  
14 Just to hear Dr. Height talk, I know  
15 Dr. Height very well. I am a student of  
16 Dr. Mary McCloud-Bethune and Dr. Height. But  
17 every time I hear her a new dimension opens  
18 up inside of me. And to hear how she was  
19 able today to just show a new dimension of  
20 reparations, because Mr. Conyers has -- he  
21 brought me into this. And I have the  
22 philosophical and the academic things which

1 he gave me. And of course, my dear colleague  
2 that I always mispronounce her name, Adjua,  
3 added to it.

4 But today, to sit here between  
5 these two gave me all the reason for being  
6 here. I must leave here soon to go back to  
7 the floor because our bill, Treasury Postal  
8 Conference, has come onto the floor. But I'm  
9 sitting next to Dorothy Height, and to my  
10 right I'm sitting in the seat of the ranking  
11 member of the Judiciary Committee.

12 But I want to tell you something.  
13 As Ms. Bethune used to say, what hath God  
14 wrought? He is going to be in this seat next  
15 year. He is going to be in the chairman's  
16 seat. Now, that's what I call reparation.  
17 I'm very serious about it. He is going to be  
18 chairman of the Judiciary Committee. That  
19 means a great deal.

20 I see reparations in a different  
21 dimension from many of you. Or I feel that  
22 the philosophical basis is good, but I'm --

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1 you know, I'm getting a little hesitant about  
2 continuing to talk about reparations and  
3 continuing to bring in the academic agenda.  
4 That's fine. But I want us to be able to get  
5 a plan of action to move further.

6 And to hear this student today, he  
7 really charged me up because he does have a  
8 plan of action that will really stimulate the  
9 young people to carry this on and on and on.  
10 And to hear Dorothy to have so many new  
11 thoughts, and to initiate them into education  
12 and how youngsters are going to go forward.

13 And I have a very strong group of  
14 NCOBRA in my community, and they are here  
15 today, and they keep me charged up about  
16 reparations, you know. In politics a lot of  
17 times we get all carried away with our own  
18 voices, and we many times don't hear what the  
19 people want to hear. We can tell them a lot  
20 about the policy and what we're doing here in  
21 Washington. Or we can tell them a whole lot  
22 about Medicare and Medicaid. And we can tell

1 them a lot about prescription drugs. But  
2 many times they don't even want to hear that.

3           They want to know about what has  
4 happened to their people and where you're  
5 going with our people. Are you in the base  
6 where you can face where we've gone and where  
7 we've come from? And many times I let them  
8 know that I've been there, that I started out  
9 where they will be one day if we don't watch  
10 ourselves. That is, my grandmother was a  
11 washerwoman, my grandfather was a slave.  
12 It's hard for me to talk about it.

13           I'm going to tell you the rest. I  
14 came from state where I couldn't even go to a  
15 state university. And it gives me such a  
16 pleasure to be here today to see you knowing  
17 what this movement has to be about and that  
18 we were statutorily exempt from going to a  
19 state university. But things had to change  
20 didn't they? And they did change. That's  
21 why it's so important that we not forget  
22 slavery, that we not forget where we came

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1 from.

2           It's so very important that we keep  
3 telling people over and over again that don't  
4 forget your roots. Don't forget that your  
5 mother washed clothes, washed and ironed for  
6 white folks. Don't forget that. Don't  
7 forget that your daddy had to dig ditches.  
8 And the more you do that the better it's  
9 going to keep this movement going.

10           That's why these young people are  
11 so fired up. They're tired of hearing us  
12 theorize. They want us to move forward.  
13 Now, when I think of reparation as I used to,  
14 all I thought about was getting something  
15 back. But it's much more than that. It's  
16 much more than getting a handout from them.

17           They wouldn't never pay us for what  
18 we suffered. There isn't enough money in the  
19 world. But in the end we have to keep this  
20 going. I served as a member of the Florida  
21 legislature, and reparations to us was  
22 getting justice for black people who had been

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1 kept on in Florida's prisons forever for  
2 nothing. That was a reparations movement to  
3 us.

4           You may have heard of Pittson  
5 Lee (?) who stayed on Florida's death row for  
6 years, and it was because of black people who  
7 were elected to the legislature who got  
8 Pittson Lee from behind the threat of the  
9 electric chair. That's reparations to me.

10           What else is reparations to me,  
11 when we help Rosewood. It took forever to  
12 get the state of Florida to recognize they  
13 had burned black folks out of a town. And  
14 the reparation movement is to get blacks who  
15 are filled with this fervor and the rage that  
16 only slavery could bring to come to elected  
17 office and to say we need to equalize and to  
18 do all the things we need to do to carry us  
19 forward.

20           I have so many stories to tell that  
21 I won't take your time to tell them. See,  
22 I'm not as cool as Mr. Conyers. I'm too

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1 passionate to tell this story.

2           So I say to you today coming here  
3 is a real, real blessing. And let my people  
4 in NCOBRA know that we're going to keep going  
5 and to say to Mr. Conyers this commission  
6 will come, it will come right from this  
7 Congress.

8           I never will forget Jack, what's  
9 his name, used to be chairman of this  
10 committee?

11           MR. CONYERS: Jack Brooks, Texas.

12           MS. MEEK: I begged him to do  
13 something about reparations. I begged him to  
14 do something about the Haitians. But guess  
15 what, he isn't here anymore. Look who's in  
16 his seat.

17           So I'm saying that reparations is  
18 something that cuts across all disciplines,  
19 and unless we continue to keep it in the back  
20 of our minds, our minds will be flooded with  
21 other stuff that's not substantial to the  
22 freedom of our people. I thank you.

1 (Applause)

2 MR. CONYERS: Thank you. I've got  
3 a pretty good co-chairman haven't I? Carrie  
4 Meek, Florida, Congresswoman. Going on the  
5 floor to do battle for some appropriations  
6 that we need so badly. Thank you so much.

7 I just want to acknowledge the  
8 entry into the room sitting next to me is the  
9 congresswoman on the Judiciary Committee that  
10 serves with me right in this room right on  
11 this panel and podium, the Honorable Sheila  
12 Jackson-Lee of Houston, Texas, sitting next  
13 to me, and we're going to recognize her in  
14 just a few minutes.

15 Right now I'd like to bring the  
16 president of the Harvest Institute,  
17 Dr. Claude Anderson, whom I have listened to  
18 and read across the years. His books "Black  
19 Labor/White Wealth" and other materials have  
20 made him a stand-by on many television radio  
21 shows, as well as important symposiums and  
22 conferences on the issues of economic

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1 empowerment for the descendants of Africans  
2 in the United States of America and  
3 throughout the world.

4           Whenever there is an important  
5 national convention or convening of people to  
6 talk about this subject, I never fail to find  
7 him on the program, and enjoy him immensely.  
8 We welcome now Dr. Claude Anderson.

9           DR. ANDERSON: Thank you very much,  
10 Congressman Conyers, and to my colleagues let  
11 me say good afternoon to you, and plus the  
12 members of the audience.

13           According to John's letter, he  
14 indicated to me that he wants me to speak to  
15 developing a national plan and, John, that's  
16 what I'll try to do for you very quickly.  
17 But let me preface that by simply saying that  
18 if you hear about reparations, get this very  
19 firmly fixed in your mind, you're not here  
20 for a parlor discussion. It's not something  
21 to talk about that's nice. If you don't get  
22 reparations to black folk, you're through in

1 this country. Let me be that very specific  
2 for you.

3           You see, what's happening to black  
4 Americans is that black Americans have been  
5 systematically socially engineered into the  
6 lowest level of a real life Monopoly game.  
7 You do not own and control a sufficient  
8 amount of anything to be competitive in  
9 America, and you've been marginalized now  
10 for 400 years. You're getting ready to be  
11 buried. You can get buried under at least a  
12 whole broad group -- ambiguous groupings.  
13 That's everything from cultural groups,  
14 language groups, and gender groups. You're  
15 going down. It's not longer an issue. You'd  
16 better get reparations and get it fast.

17           Now, to get reparations, one of the  
18 things I've been trying to do now for 30  
19 years beginning with the state of Florida  
20 when Governor Ruben Askew put me over  
21 education when they had no blacks in politics  
22 in Florida was to write the first Affirmative

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1 Action plan in the United States, and that  
2 was written to be reparations for black folk  
3 in 1971. And George Bush, Junior, I guess,  
4 what's his name, Jeb Bush just killed it off  
5 about six months ago.

6 But what's happening now is that  
7 what I'm trying to do is to create the  
8 Harvest Institute that will try to take all  
9 my colleagues here and as much as possible  
10 try to give you new points of information to  
11 take you outside the box. Part of the  
12 problem we got in trying to deal with  
13 reparations and a lot of the other racial  
14 issues in the country is that keep trying to  
15 think and find solutions inside the box.  
16 There are no solutions inside the box for  
17 black folk. You got to get outside and try  
18 to find them and get a long-term perspective  
19 and a long view on it. And that's what the  
20 Harvest Institute is in existence for, and  
21 that's what they're going to stay in  
22 existence for.

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1           Now, the reason you cannot win, as  
2 I said, is that you've been locked into this  
3 low level of a real life Monopoly game. You  
4 do not own and control enough of wealth.  
5 See, in 1860, for instance, black folk as a  
6 direct result of slavery had an ownership.  
7 When you were 98 percent slaves you had an  
8 ownership of one-half of 1 percent of this  
9 nation's wealth in 1860 on the eve of the  
10 Civil War.

11           Now, this is the richest country in  
12 the world, the most capitalistic country in  
13 the world, and here you are 140 years after  
14 slavery when you're supposedly 100 percent  
15 free and you still only have one-half of 1  
16 percent of this nation's wealth. You cannot  
17 compete.

18           The typical average white person in  
19 America has 3,500 times more money than you  
20 have. That's not true only of blacks in  
21 America, it's true of the world  
22 internationally. What's happening right now

1 is blacks are a marginalized, subordinated  
2 class of people all over the earth. You have  
3 one-half of 1 percent of wealth in this  
4 nation. The same thing is true all over the  
5 world.

6 In the world there's approximately  
7 \$392 trillion worth of wealth on the earth,  
8 and black folk around the world have less  
9 than 1 percent ownership of it. That  
10 includes all the African countries, that  
11 includes Brazil, the Caribbean, and America.  
12 You don't own enough to control anything.  
13 Whites control almost 100 percent of all the  
14 wealth, power, resources, privileges, and  
15 controls of all levels of government. You're  
16 playing a game you can't win.

17 You got to get reparations. Now,  
18 how are you going to get it? Let me give  
19 you, run through three or four things very  
20 quickly because I don't want to take up your  
21 time here.

22 The first thing you must do, I've

1 heard it mentioned already, we got to commit  
2 a national campaign all over this country to  
3 sort of publicizing the issue of reparations  
4 for black folks, not as something nice, but  
5 as necessity, period.

6 That means every living soul, every  
7 organization, every court, every institution,  
8 in this country must begin to start promoting  
9 reparations for black folk all over this  
10 country. That's level one is a massive,  
11 massive promotion of reparations for black  
12 folk.

13 Second level, level two, what we  
14 must do at the second level two now is to  
15 start having fact-finding hearings. You must  
16 have fact-finding hearings all over this  
17 country, and you're going to have fact-  
18 finding hearings on at least two different  
19 levels. One is you're going to go after fact  
20 finding about what roles governments have  
21 played in the reparations -- I mean in the  
22 slavery trade against black folks and

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1 enslaving the black folk, the marginalization  
2 of black folk, and that should break down  
3 into two levels. One is to investigate all  
4 levels of domestic governments, that's city,  
5 county, federal, and state governments. And  
6 the second group would go after the  
7 international.

8           So you should have two groups of  
9 black folk in this country exploring and fact  
10 finding on what roles government have played,  
11 one domestically and one internationally.

12           On the left-hand side you should be  
13 doing the same thing for the domestic side.  
14 You should be going after the private sector.  
15 You should be going after all the private  
16 corporations in the United States, what roles  
17 they played and how they benefited directly  
18 from slavery. And also on the same side, you  
19 must go after all the international  
20 corporations and the roles they played and  
21 how they benefited.

22           Now, the Harvest Institute right

1 now, my think tank, we've already picked up  
2 one, and we put out a press release on that.  
3 We are going after the domestic role that  
4 major corporations played in the United  
5 States. We've already identified  
6 approximately 240 companies that are still in  
7 existence that profiteered directly and  
8 enriched themselves off of black folk. We're  
9 going after that.

10           And what we have to do in our fact  
11 finding is be able to factuate, document the  
12 direct line between how blacks have been  
13 crippled all the way to economically,  
14 politically, socially, and educationally, and  
15 tie it into these major corporations or tie  
16 it into levels of government. That's our  
17 level two.

18           Level three, you must then start  
19 having a national convention in this country.  
20 And right now I think Dorothy Tilghman in  
21 Chicago -- we talked about this -- she's  
22 going to try to call one in Chicago this

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1 coming year. We must have everybody who's  
2 playing a role like Congressman Conyers and  
3 everybody from the Congress, NCOBRA,  
4 everybody should be at a national convention  
5 where we all come in there to not only  
6 energize each other but to share information  
7 and see where we are. They are trying to set  
8 this up for this coming February someplace in  
9 the United States, possibly Chicago. That's  
10 your third level.

11           The fourth level you should start  
12 doing is out of this conference should come  
13 strategies and plans and a specific role  
14 model. You got to have a model, a model that  
15 every black can tie into, a model for  
16 reparations.

17           Now, my model is a little different  
18 from everyone else's and that's because I'm  
19 outside the box, and I'm going to try to pull  
20 everybody outside if I can get them. Most  
21 people are going to try to follow the Jewish  
22 reparations model or the Japanese model. I'm

1 following the Indian model. The Indians are  
2 the most appropriate model if you want to  
3 track down doing anything to get reparations  
4 for black folk.

5           Why? Because American Indians and  
6 black folk were spelled out in the  
7 Constitution, the Indians on reservations and  
8 black folk. There's a direct lineage between  
9 those two groups. If you really want to  
10 track and get reparations, the easiest and  
11 quickest way is to go find out what happened  
12 to American Indians, what benefits they got,  
13 and track it. In my new book called *Power* it  
14 takes through every one of those steps and  
15 you can follow it. If you pick that up you  
16 came right to reparations very quickly  
17 because it will be very difficult for the  
18 government to deny black folk the same thing  
19 they're giving the Indians.

20           So when you hear people talking  
21 about how bad off Indians are the first thing  
22 you should say is fine, if Indians are that



1 bad off put us as black folk in the same  
2 status with the Indians. We'll take that  
3 because see, first of all, nobody declared  
4 Indians to be a nation. Indians declared  
5 themselves to be a nation. They declared  
6 themselves to be a nation all the way up  
7 until about 1832, when Supreme Court Justice  
8 Marshall said okay, I'll recognize you as a  
9 nation.

10 We never declared ourselves to be a  
11 nation. We've always tried to do just the  
12 opposite what the Indians did. Once they  
13 became a nation they drew up a constitution  
14 for themselves. We never had a constitution.  
15 And what the Indians did with that  
16 constitution is then to go to the United  
17 States government and say we do not want to  
18 integrate.

19 We did just the opposite. We  
20 integrated and I can track everything right  
21 down or we can follow the Indian model if you  
22 want to and all that's already built into the

1 law and there's a direct lineage between  
2 American Indians and black folk that you can  
3 follow very easily and get to reparations.

4 But we need to have a model and in  
5 my new book I'll get that model. It should  
6 be on the stand in about another month.  
7 You'll get the empowernomics (?) model that  
8 will you through all those steps of what they  
9 did throughout history from the Blair (?)  
10 Amendments and everything else. You can  
11 track them very easily, and it would be very  
12 difficult for the United States government to  
13 deny you reparations when the only two people  
14 that have a constitutional relationship with  
15 this government is black folk and Indians.

16 Just like Indians use what they  
17 call natural rights and lay their claim  
18 against the land we should use natural law  
19 and lay a claim against our misappropriated  
20 labor.

21 The next level which you must do is  
22 move to a legal step. You need to form at

1 the fourth level, get you a legal body right  
2 now whether it's going to be pro bono or  
3 paid, and out of our convention we should be  
4 able to raise some funds to set up a mass  
5 legal body that would be ready to start  
6 serving suits based on those facts that  
7 you're going to find at the second level.  
8 When we start finding those, then we should  
9 have people going after suits, one side suing  
10 the different levels of government, the other  
11 side suing the private sector to get  
12 reparation funds for black folk.

13 At the sixth level you need to set  
14 up some kind of a pool, a resource or  
15 retrieval agency, that every time we get some  
16 benefits will go into a special fund that  
17 will be held for pooling and aggregating.  
18 Now, then, out of that special agency we'll  
19 break away into two groups, what I would  
20 recommend.

21 One, you would have an economic  
22 development bank on the East Coast and an

1 economic development bank on the West Coast  
2 and what those banks will do is take most of  
3 the money you get and not give it to black  
4 folk as individuals. You put it into a  
5 massive bank where black folk can go draw  
6 that money to get low-interest loans or free  
7 money to build businesses and industries  
8 throughout the United States.

9           If you tracked the Indians, you  
10 should try to get yourself some tax-free or  
11 tax-exempt land just like the Indians and go  
12 grab any piece of land and federalize it, put  
13 up a casino. You tell them you're going to  
14 do the same thing as a black person, get  
15 tax-exempt statuses.

16           We can go on and on. There's a lot  
17 of things we can track. Go after the  
18 Indians. But the thing that's most important  
19 and I'm going to quit is that you got to  
20 understand that reparations are an absolute  
21 necessity. We're going to get buried alive.  
22 We do not have enough to be able to compete

1 in this society, and the further we get away  
2 from the civil rights movement the worse  
3 things are going to get.

4 When people start talking about  
5 slavery don't just talk about slavery. Talk  
6 about Jim Crow slavery and benign neglect.  
7 You got to understand what slavery was.  
8 Slavery is the illegitimate child of racism.  
9 Racism still exists. That's slavery because  
10 what racism does, racism keeps and maintains  
11 what was created by slavery.

12 Racism is a competitive economic  
13 struggle between groups of people for power  
14 and wealth, and racism never existed until  
15 the 16th century. When slavery went out of  
16 existence racism took over. Racism has gone  
17 from meaning slavery to being something  
18 biological. Then it moved on and by the  
19 1800s it returned to be something as a  
20 personal behavior or an attitude and not a  
21 bias and a prejudice.

22 Racism has nothing to do with

1 attitudes, with prejudice, and with bias.  
2 Racism is a competitive group contest between  
3 people for resources and for superiority.  
4 Racism is a race without a finish line. I  
5 thank you very much.

6 MR. CONYERS: Do we have a panel  
7 here or what? Let's give him another round  
8 of applause. How would you like to get those  
9 remarks printed out on your computer so that  
10 you could really study them? Wouldn't that  
11 be something important? Do you permit us to  
12 do that --

13 MR. ANDERSON: John, you know,  
14 anything you want.

15 MR. CONYERS: Without violating any  
16 copyright laws?

17 MR. ANDERSON: Anything you want.

18 MR. CONYERS: But this discussion  
19 that started with Dr. Height and has gone  
20 around the table except for two of our  
21 presenters is material for study and  
22 examination, folks, because we're talking

1 about new concepts, new ideas, and new ways  
2 to become organized and develop a strategy,  
3 and we thank you very, very much.

4 I would like now to just introduce  
5 a young lady who is my right hand in the  
6 Judiciary Committee, a leading force in the  
7 Congress herself. She is a leader in the  
8 Democratic congressional system in the House.  
9 She speaks for women and for people of color  
10 all over the world. She is the ranking  
11 member on the Subcommittee on Immigration on  
12 the Judiciary Committee. We find her active  
13 in all fronts of legislative progress, and  
14 her name is Sheila Jackson-Lee of Houston,  
15 Texas, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee.  
16 Let's welcome her now.

17 MS. JACKSON-LEE: Mister Chairman,  
18 and I love saying those words, Chairman  
19 Conyers, thank you very much for providing us  
20 with an opportunity in this room, in this  
21 particular room, for a discussion that  
22 warrants, as the panelists have so aptly

1 said, not only intellectual discussion but a  
2 plan.

3 Let me acknowledge the work of John  
4 Conyers because he has fielded and has been  
5 in the vineyards. I will not use the term  
6 "fields" now. He was in the vineyards, and  
7 he was in the vineyards for a very long time.  
8 I am in an admirable position to be able to  
9 acknowledge the thinkers, Chairman Conyers,  
10 who are at this table, those who have already  
11 spoken and those who will speak. We've  
12 already noted the leadership of Dr. Height.  
13 We've just heard Dr. Anderson, and I  
14 apologize to those who I have not had the  
15 opportunity to hear.

16 My remarks will be geared toward  
17 the legislative approach and they will be  
18 brief. For those of you in the audience I  
19 want you take note that you are in the  
20 Judiciary Room, and if you can for a moment  
21 track your history to know the room of the  
22 Voter Rights Act of 1965, the room of the



1 1964 Civil Rights Act, the room I might say,  
2 and of course I'm stretching it a little bit  
3 because this building was not built, but just  
4 imagine this Congress and the Judiciary  
5 Committee discussing slavery, discussing  
6 abolition of such, discussing reconstruction.

7           So my point to those who are here  
8 and others who might listen, break the fear,  
9 take the fearfulness out of your minds and  
10 hearts about being able to discuss  
11 reparations. Break the fear of organizing  
12 with coalitions, whether it is Native  
13 Americans, whether it is those who have  
14 benefited from the addressing of the horrible  
15 grievance of the Holocaust, whether it is  
16 those who were interred during World War II,  
17 whether those who suffered through the  
18 Tuskegee experiment.

19           It is imperative that the fear is  
20 broken on Wall Street, at Nasdaq, in the  
21 halls of corporate America, in the  
22 institutions of higher learning, break the

1 fear.

2           Reparations is justice and the  
3 reason why John Conyers and HR-40, which we  
4 all know by heart, is the ranking member of  
5 the Judiciary Committee soon to be the  
6 Chairman continues the fight of reparations.  
7 It is not a divisive fight. It is not a  
8 separatist fight. It is a fight for America  
9 to embrace.

10           As we formulate the plan I am going  
11 to be seeking those as the Chairman has  
12 already sought, the barons of industry, to  
13 understand reparations, the presidency to  
14 understand reparations, the Congress to  
15 understand reparations, in a collaborative,  
16 unfearful, nonthreatening manner of resolve.  
17 We're in this room for justice. Reparations  
18 is equated to justice.

19           This fight can be ours. We are  
20 brilliant. We can certainly carry it on with  
21 the levels of intellect, the state  
22 representatives, the city council members,

1 the aldermen, but it is in fact, Chairman  
2 Conyers, not a fight that is a lonely one.  
3 It is simply a fight of justice.

4 I thank you all for being here. I  
5 believe your presence suggests that we are in  
6 collaboration linked together to break the  
7 fear and the cycle and for this plan, this  
8 strategy, and this thought to finally come  
9 into fruition. I thank you, Chairman  
10 Conyers, for this very excellent panel.

11 MR. CONYERS: It was a pleasure to  
12 hear from you. This is one of the most  
13 dynamic people in the Congress. I didn't say  
14 dynamic women. This is one of the most  
15 dynamic speakers in the U.S. Congress, Sheila  
16 Jackson-Lee. You'll hear a lot more from her  
17 as we move forward. She has asked to be  
18 excused now. She has commitments that she  
19 must attend to, but thank you for coming.

20 MS. JACKSON-LEE: Thank you.

21 MR. CONYERS: Thank you very much.  
22 Dr. Conrad Worrill from Chicago is an old and

1 dear friend of mine. He has worked in  
2 progressive movements across the nation and  
3 around the world. He has headed the National  
4 Black United Front. He has worked in  
5 liberation struggles. He has worked for  
6 candidates.

7 I remember the Harold Washington  
8 campaign. He was an organizer of the Million  
9 Man March. He has spoken at the United  
10 Nations and the World Court seeking redress  
11 and restitution and documenting the crimes  
12 committed against the people of African  
13 descent.

14 He is a writer and a speaker, and  
15 I'm so glad that he is in this panel that the  
16 Congressional Black Caucus is holding on its  
17 thirtieth anniversary. Let's welcome  
18 Dr. Conrad Worrill, please.

19 DR. WORRILL: Thank you,  
20 Congressman Conyers. We go way back as you  
21 indicated. I think we even go back to Gary  
22 and the National Black Political Convention

1 in 1972, and I think that you and Charles  
2 Diggs out of Detroit supported us when we had  
3 the first African Liberation Day March May  
4 27, 1972, right here in Washington, D.C.,  
5 raising up the questions that we are an  
6 African people in support of our struggles in  
7 Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau against  
8 Portuguese colonialism at that time in  
9 history.

10 So it's indeed an honor to be here  
11 today to just share some brief remarks. I'd  
12 also like to congratulate your co-chair, your  
13 co-sponsor of this hearing, Congresswoman  
14 Carrie Meeks, most of the people on this  
15 panel, my good friend Ron Daniels, Ayatollah  
16 (?), S.E. Anderson, and Claude Anderson and  
17 Ed Vaughn, we've been in more meetings  
18 together over the last 30 years that it can't  
19 be counted.

20 What we need to understand as a  
21 result of the European onslaught on the world  
22 and how it manifests itself in education and

1 curriculum development, we don't fully  
2 understand that both African and European  
3 children have a misconception about the role  
4 their prospective peoples have played in the  
5 development of civilization.

6           Because of the exaggeration of the  
7 lives and achievement of Western heroes,  
8 especially Christopher Columbus, school  
9 children in general are of the opinion that  
10 most of the world's explorations and  
11 discoveries were made by Europeans.

12           They also believe that Europeans  
13 went on discovery missions to other countries  
14 in order to spread Christianity and  
15 civilization. The contrary is true in many  
16 cases. In their expansion into Africa, Asia,  
17 the Caribbean Islands, and the Americas the  
18 Europeans destroyed many old and well-  
19 functioning societies usually for political  
20 or economic gain.

21           The miseducation we have received  
22 has given us another picture of the

1 phenomenon in history and we have forgotten a  
2 recurring fact of history. That is, powerful  
3 people never have to prove anything to  
4 anyone. By extension, powerful people never  
5 apologize to powerless people for the actions  
6 they take in order to remain in power and  
7 powerful people never teach powerless people  
8 how to take power away from them.

9           So it is in that context that we  
10 have to understand the epistemological  
11 foundation of ideas in the Western world.  
12 Epistemology simply means theory, the  
13 foundation of knowledge, and we need to just  
14 briefly understand the so-called European  
15 father of history. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich  
16 Hegel wrapped up this whole conceptualization  
17 of white supremacy that we're still under in  
18 the arena of ideas when he said in the 18th  
19 century that the negro in Africa exhibits the  
20 natural man in his completely wild and  
21 untamed state. There is nothing harmonious  
22 with the humanity to be found in this type of

1 character.

2           Then he goes on to say that slavery  
3 thus, Mr. Walter Williams, was an improvement  
4 of the condition of negroes. Then finally he  
5 says at this point we leave Africa.

6           Now, this is the father of European  
7 history talking who wrote a book that we all  
8 should read called History, not to mention it  
9 again for it is not an historical part of the  
10 world, it has no movements, developments to  
11 exhibit, historical movements in it. Even  
12 this northern part belongs to the Asiatic or  
13 European world. Are you listening to this?

14           Egypt will be considered in  
15 reference to its Western faith, but it does  
16 not belong to the African spirit. What we  
17 probably understand by Africa is the  
18 unhistorical, undeveloped spirit still in  
19 vogue in conditions of men and nature and  
20 which has to be presented here as only on the  
21 threshold of world history.

22           We have to understand that we are

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1 in a war and the war is over ideas and ideas  
2 are weapons of war. So when the slave trade  
3 was abolished in Britain, Spain, Portugal,  
4 and the slave-trading nations and finally  
5 slavery was allegedly abolished in the United  
6 States the former slave-trading nations were  
7 still on the continent of Africa fighting  
8 each other over territories for Africa. They  
9 came together in 1884 in Berlin, Germany,  
10 because the French, if you ever go to Dakar  
11 and you go to G----Island and you see the  
12 guns that are still there today of the French  
13 and the British who were fighting each other  
14 for the western territory of Africa.

15 So at this Berlin conference they  
16 decided, the former slave-trading nations, to  
17 divide up Africa among themselves. So the  
18 French got a little piece of Africa, the  
19 Portuguese got a little piece of Africa, the  
20 Italians got a little piece of Africa, the  
21 Spanish got a little piece of Africa, and  
22 that ushered in the colonization of Africa.

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1 But at the same time the European  
2 social science disciplines were emerging at  
3 the University of Chicago and at Harvard and  
4 at other so-called white supremacy  
5 universities that stand today in their  
6 sociology, their psychology, their economics,  
7 their political science, their anthropology  
8 and history because these disciplines, these  
9 academic disciplines, provided the rationale  
10 to explain three phenomena, god, man, and  
11 society.

12 So here we are today on the back of  
13 Callie House (?). We must raise her name,  
14 who was one of the first leaders of the  
15 reparations movement in her Ex-Slave Bounty  
16 and Reparations Society that had over 100,000  
17 members to get pension funds for those  
18 so-called slaves after the Civil War.

19 They arrested her. A lot of people  
20 think Marcus Garvey was the first one to go  
21 to jail on mail fraud indicted by the United  
22 States government but that's not true.

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1 Callie House was indicted on mail fraud and  
2 went and served a year in the penitentiary  
3 for fighting for reparations.

4 We must raise up in this room Queen  
5 Mother Moore (?), who fought for over 60  
6 years for reparations for Africa people. So  
7 when we talk about reparations, we're talking  
8 about repair for injuries, harms, and  
9 damages.

10 There's abundant proof that Africa  
11 was the cradle of civilization centuries  
12 before the birth of Christ. The stories of  
13 the Queen of Sheba and her visits to King  
14 Solomon with an organized retinue, also the  
15 architectural wonders of the Pyramids, are  
16 clear evidence of the height to which African  
17 civilization had reached.

18 Further, the ancient kingdoms of  
19 Africa like those of Songuy (?), Banay (?),  
20 Ghana, and others were highly organized.  
21 Even the ancient universities like Timbuktu  
22 existed. At this time Europe was very

1 underdeveloped and America had not even been  
2 discovered.

3           This development of Africa was  
4 interrupted sometime around the 14th century  
5 by this institution called slavery. This  
6 slavery robbed Africa of her best and  
7 strongest men and women and children who were  
8 put in chains and who were exported like  
9 goods and chattel, like goats and pigs and  
10 dogs, to the islands of the Caribbean, the  
11 United States, Brazil, and elsewhere.

12           These slaves worked under very hard  
13 condition planting sugar and cotton for their  
14 masters' enrichment and prevented for  
15 centuries the development of their own  
16 countries and Africa and African people  
17 around the world.

18           The results of their work as slaves  
19 was to enrich the countries of their masters.  
20 So when you travel to France, when you travel  
21 to Italy, when you travel to Spain, when you  
22 travel to Great Britain, just think about

1 your ancestors who were at the bottom of the  
2 Atlantic Ocean because of the transatlantic  
3 slave trade which we are pushing at the  
4 United Nations World Conference on Racism  
5 through the Africa Group that the  
6 transatlantic slave trade is a crime against  
7 humanity, a crime against humanity, and that  
8 the slave trade was the foundation for the  
9 building of the Western world, including the  
10 United States.

11 So strategically we salute John  
12 Conyers for following the Japanese model on  
13 creating a study commission on reparations.  
14 This is a political strategy because most of  
15 us already know we don't have to study  
16 nothing. We already have the documents to  
17 prove that African people not only in this  
18 country, in the world, deserve reparations.  
19 There's just no question about that.

20 Finally, we have to be clear in our  
21 organizing that we don't get our people so  
22 hyped up on this money because you know right

1 now if the government of the United States  
2 gave us a check a lot of us would give the  
3 money right back to the white man. We all  
4 know this.

5 So part of the reparations movement  
6 is to address what Dr. Bobby Wright (?)  
7 addressed in his article entitled  
8 "Menticide." Menticide is the ultimate  
9 destruction of a people's mind, and so part  
10 of our reparations is to repair for the  
11 damages of our minds that have been inflicted  
12 on us whether we get material payments or  
13 not. If we can get our minds straight, maybe  
14 some of our negative behavior that exists  
15 that we inflict on each other can be  
16 eradicated. You all got me?

17 So in conclusion the National Black  
18 United Front has been working in the  
19 reparations movement since our founding in  
20 June of 1980. When NCOBRA was founded we  
21 became an organizational member of NCOBRA.  
22 We encourage everyone to link with NCOBRA in

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1 this growing reparations movement.

2           This reparations movement is 120  
3 years old. It just didn't start in the 1960s  
4 and the 1970s. We must understand that for  
5 the continuity of history we are following in  
6 the footsteps of our ancestors for revenge  
7 and redemption of what happened to them and  
8 what continues to happen to us as a people.

9           Chaka Sankofa (?) said it on the  
10 gurney in Huntsville, Alabama, when he said  
11 the call is for black power. It was in 1966  
12 in this building that Adam Clayton Powell  
13 convened the first black power conference  
14 right in this building in 1966.

15           So the call is still for black  
16 power. That's what we're struggling for,  
17 that's what we stand for, and thank you.

18           MR. CONYERS: Thank you very much.  
19 We appreciate that so much. We have two  
20 speakers left, and we must conclude by 4:00.  
21 Before Ron Daniels we're going to have Sam  
22 Anderson, Mr. Sam Anderson, Black Radical

1 Congress, which has adopted strong  
2 resolutions and effected programmatic thrusts  
3 in supporting HR-40 and the international  
4 movement in support of reparations for  
5 African descendants and reparations for the  
6 continent of Africa.

7 He has been working with Efia  
8 Nowangaza (?), Esquire, and he is always a  
9 strong leader in these conferences. I  
10 introduce and present him to you now, Mr. Sam  
11 Anderson.

12 MR. ANDERSON: Good afternoon,  
13 Congressperson Conyers. Good afternoon,  
14 sisters and brothers, and whoever else is  
15 listening or will be watching.

16 I'd like to first state that  
17 brother Claude Anderson laid out a necessary  
18 gauntlet for us to take up. It's a lot of  
19 work. We heard from a lot of people here  
20 today. It's a lot of work. The  
21 concentration of the Black Radical Congress  
22 is on making this a mass campaign, moving it



1 into a mass campaign.

2           One of the efforts, my personal  
3 effort, is here, the *Black Holocaust for*  
4 *Beginners*, which is a popularly written book  
5 that deals with the origins, the beginnings  
6 of the slave trade. I wrote it for everyday  
7 folk and not so everyday folk and it's  
8 available from me today. That's a paid  
9 advertisement.

10           I'll be reading briefly from a  
11 statement that you can have afterwards, I  
12 have copies of it, and to work on moving  
13 ahead with this whole concept of going across  
14 this country with a series of hearings to  
15 deal with this issue of reparations at the  
16 grass-roots level. The Black Radical  
17 Congress says we are working to help build a  
18 national reparations campaign with other  
19 reparations organizations and individuals  
20 which will culminate in a mobilization of  
21 several million people not only demanding  
22 reparations but actively engaged in the

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1 various efforts for its realization.

2           We understand that a comprehensive  
3 reparations campaign embraces all of our  
4 sites of struggle and areas of concern.  
5 There are many reasons why this campaign  
6 should be for reparations, not the least of  
7 which is the announcement to the United  
8 States and the world that people of African  
9 descent are determined not to begin a new  
10 millennium with this unresolved issue of  
11 compensation for past and present crimes  
12 against African humanity.

13           The following are some of the  
14 rationale for a national campaign for  
15 reparations for people of African descent. A  
16 reparations campaign enjoys major support  
17 within our communities. It has the capacity  
18 to revitalize the black liberation movement  
19 and reassert the leading role of the black  
20 progressive forces.

21           A reparations campaign is directed  
22 at the U.S. primarily, federal and state

1 governments, but also may be directed at  
2 other Western imperialist/capitalist powers  
3 and corporations that have benefited from  
4 slavery as well. Former states who  
5 participated in the slave trade and slavery  
6 and the United Nations can still be used as  
7 part of an international reparations  
8 strategy.

9           A reparations campaign is  
10 fundamentally antiracist, anticapitalist, and  
11 anti-imperialist. It attacks the very heart  
12 of these oppressive systems. A reparations  
13 campaign will include the demand to cancel  
14 the usury rates imposed upon us through  
15 killer mortgages and loan-shark credit card  
16 interest rates.

17           A reparations campaign will include  
18 a debt cancellation demand resonating  
19 throughout Africa and the diaspora but also  
20 supporting the demand for reparations for  
21 African nations and the diaspora. A  
22 reparations campaign is a powerful tool to

1 educate the people of the United States and  
2 world societies about a brutal and savage  
3 system that is the basis for institutional  
4 racism and white supremacist suppression  
5 today, a system which inflicted on Africa  
6 people the most horrific form of cultural  
7 genocide, virtually complete destruction of  
8 historical memory, religion, language,  
9 traditions, ancestry, which continues to be  
10 the basis for the racist dehumanization and  
11 demonization of African people and other  
12 oppressed people of color.

13           A reparations campaign will educate  
14 our people to the fact that our ancestral  
15 mothers have never been compensated for the  
16 reproduction of human capital, that is,  
17 giving birth to an African child during  
18 slavery which meant that this child  
19 automatically had a price value. This took  
20 place through rape and forced breeding.

21           This most beastly form of slavery  
22 tried to humiliate and strip our ancestral

1 mothers and fathers of their womanhood and  
2 manhood. The black woman has not only never  
3 been compensated for her brutal fieldwork and  
4 torturous work in the master's house but also  
5 her domestic chores within the slave  
6 quarters.

7           In addition, a reparations campaign  
8 will demand just compensation for the  
9 millions of black children forced into  
10 horrific death-inducing child labor from the  
11 age of 3 years. A reparations campaign will  
12 expose the additional injuries inflicted  
13 during slavery, the war against free blacks.  
14 This war was an anticipation of what would  
15 become of us during post-slavery oppression,  
16 rapes, lynchings, pogroms, state-sanctioned  
17 and -initiated murder, and anti-migration  
18 laws.

19           For instance, this included 19th  
20 century anti-migration laws often in state  
21 constitutions that were passed to stop  
22 African Americans from settling in Illinois,

1 Indiana, and Oregon. This pattern of  
2 conscious legal exclusion denied our  
3 ancestors the possibility of benefiting from  
4 land grants made available for old and new  
5 members of these states.

6           These are legal injuries that must  
7 be calculated into the reparations demand.

8 We cannot look at the oppression and  
9 repression of our enslaved and "free"  
10 ancestors as two distinct realities. They  
11 were just two sides of the same racist and  
12 capitalist coins that fed the banks and  
13 wallets of the ruling classes of Europe and  
14 the Americas.

15           A reparations campaign will educate  
16 our people to the fact that our ancestral  
17 fathers had to face systematic humiliating  
18 attempts to strip them of their manhood and  
19 dignity. A reparations campaign is a  
20 self-reliant movement. It is a nation-  
21 building campaign that allows black people to  
22 address some of the fundamental issues

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1 confronting our survival today. It gives us  
2 the ability to create our very own self-  
3 determining institutions in developing jobs  
4 with a living wage, quality affordable  
5 housing, health care, and an antiracist  
6 education.

7 A reparations campaign will include  
8 the fight to free all political prisoners and  
9 prisoners of war as well as the battle to  
10 dismantle the racist prison industrial  
11 complex. A reparations campaign is also one  
12 that will include free medical care from  
13 birth to death, free education from  
14 kindergarten through graduate school at any  
15 public and private school.

16 A reparations campaign is the most  
17 powerful weapon that can be used against  
18 racism and the right-wing onslaught on  
19 Affirmative Action. A reparations campaign  
20 will create a strategic bridge between Africa  
21 and the diaspora. A reparations campaign is  
22 ultimately a political offensive. Thank you.

1           MR. DANIELS: Thank you very much,  
2 Sam Anderson. The congressman has to go take  
3 a vote, and I was asked to do the concluding  
4 presentation and to sit in his stead as we  
5 wind down this incredibly important session  
6 on reparations and questions of empowerment.  
7 Again, my name is Ron Daniels. I'm the  
8 executive director of the Center for  
9 Constitutional rights but perhaps more  
10 importantly a long-time supporter of the  
11 struggle for reparations.

12           I'd like first of all to commend  
13 the Chairman in waiting, the Chairman soon to  
14 be of the Judiciary Committee, John Conyers,  
15 who we must recognize on so many of these  
16 critical questions because so many of us, as  
17 Conrad Worrill referred to the Gary  
18 convention, we had a concept and an idea in  
19 the '60s and the '70s, Ed Vaughn, of what we  
20 wanted to see in black elected officials.

21           We must say candidly that we've not  
22 always been happy with what the outcome has



1 been in many respects but I think in John  
2 Conyers and we certainly have seen today  
3 Carrie Meek and Sheila Jackson-Lee and some  
4 who sit on this panel the models and examples  
5 of the kind of elected official, black  
6 elected official, but really elected official  
7 who are at the cutting edge of advancing a  
8 vision for a new society and a way in which  
9 we can do things differently. That's what we  
10 expected, that's what we hoped for, and  
11 certainly John Conyers has epitomized that.  
12 Let's give John Conyers another round of  
13 applause for his extraordinary leadership.

14 (Applause)

15 MR. DANIELS: I'd like to also say  
16 it is a great honor to be sitting by Dorothy  
17 Height. Dorothy Height is the president  
18 emeritus of an organization founded by Mary  
19 McCloud Bethune, the National Council of  
20 Negro Women, and for years and years and  
21 years she's been there. The organization  
22 sometimes people consider to be somewhat

1 moderate. Some of us have been on this  
2 pan-African idea for a long time, but there's  
3 a saying, June Bug Jabo Jones, that said,  
4 "Mr. Say ain't nothing; Mr. Do is  
5 everything."

6 I recall being in Zimbabwe I think  
7 in about 1988 and on the ground in Zimbabwe  
8 was a representative of the National Council  
9 of Negro Women with a concrete program  
10 dealing with the empowerment of African  
11 people, and that was coming out of the  
12 National Council of Negro Women. So what I  
13 say is a lot of times people will talk about  
14 things, but the national council through  
15 Dorothy Height's leadership has done the job  
16 and, more importantly, used the auspices of  
17 the prestige of that organization to come  
18 forward.

19 I remember you being at the Redeem  
20 the Dream March. So I think we all are  
21 indebted to you, Ms. Height, for your  
22 leadership and for being our mother in this

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1 period. Thank you so much.

2 I also have to mention Queen Mother  
3 Moore, who was already mentioned, because  
4 that's how I learned about reparations when  
5 Queen Mother Moore grabbed me as a master's  
6 degree student at the State University of New  
7 York at Albany who knew nothing about black  
8 people. I mean, that's disgraceful and  
9 talked about brain surgery to deconstipate my  
10 mind, and thank God I hope she did something  
11 that was reasonably good in that regard.

12 Finally, in terms of introductory  
13 remarks, NCOBRA, the National Coalition of  
14 Blacks for Reparations in America, we owe  
15 them and the reason I say this is because as  
16 African people one of the things that we have  
17 to avoid is the propensity to recreate,  
18 retread. We have to talk about the concepts  
19 of operational unity and building united  
20 fronts.

21 So though I admire many writers and  
22 authors and so forth, and I certainly admire

1 Randall Robinson for his extraordinary work,  
2 I think it is problematic when we lay out  
3 great treatises and don't acknowledge those  
4 who've come before us like Queen Mother Moore  
5 and this organization NCOBRA.

6           So I would appeal to all of us as  
7 this movement is now gaining momentum, and it  
8 is, and reaching a crescendo that this  
9 organization has been in the trenches, has  
10 been doing the hard work and the hard labor  
11 when a whole lot of people were running away  
12 from the issue. And as we reach this point  
13 now when it's reaching a crescendo I don't  
14 want us moving away from NCOBRA. I want us  
15 to join it, become a part of it, and embrace  
16 it and move forward from that vantage point.

17           I mean that from the bottom of my  
18 heart because we have to do specialization  
19 and division of labor. NCOBRA has not tried  
20 to do things on all these other issues. It  
21 has one issue. So let's make the  
22 organization that's been working on that one

1 issue do the job well.

2           So if we're going to have a  
3 national convention I'm all for that, but I  
4 don't want to have a national convention in  
5 which NCOBRA is not playing a leading role in  
6 that effort.

7           Having said that, I don't really  
8 have much profound to say on this question.  
9 I do think that the time is right for  
10 reparations. I support HR-40 and have always  
11 supported HR-40, not because it was going to  
12 give us reparations but because it's  
13 strategic. If we can get the adoption of HR-  
14 40 then the entire nation will have to focus  
15 for a period of time on the question of  
16 reparations.

17           And what will that be? It will be  
18 a massive educational campaign of some  
19 African Americans because we must admit that  
20 we have many African Americans who've never  
21 heard of reparations and who are afraid of  
22 reparations.

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1           As our sister, Congresswoman Carrie  
2 Meek said, this is about having faith and  
3 courage and strength. Sheila Jackson-Lee  
4 mentioned the same thing. So we're talking  
5 about a massive educational campaign in which  
6 the stories that Dr. Conrad Worrill and so  
7 many other people have told about what  
8 happened in history would not only be  
9 authenticated. They would be shared.

10           Quite frankly among many people who  
11 are people of color and even some who are in  
12 the progressive white sectors and average  
13 ordinary people, if they were to hear what  
14 they've not heard in terms of any of their  
15 education because we have in fact been all  
16 victims to some degree of the miseducation of  
17 people in this country, then I've got to  
18 believe that we can build the critical mass  
19 that's necessary to get this issue passed  
20 once and for all.

21           So I support HR-40 as strategic.  
22 So we need to bring it up to our presidential

1 candidates, as has been mentioned, to our  
2 congress people all around the country during  
3 this election year. It is a very important  
4 tool for mass education.

5           We need to struggle to broaden the  
6 base, and in that regard I think Randall  
7 Robinson's book *The Debt* has been helpful in  
8 that regard in getting more people talking  
9 about the issue. As Sam Anderson has  
10 mentioned and others, we need a mass movement  
11 around this question. I really think the  
12 notion of us pulling together as many forces  
13 as possible under the leadership of NCOBRA to  
14 discuss this issue of a mass campaign with  
15 expert public relations people on how to fund  
16 it is incredibly important at this juncture.  
17 We really need to do that because we need a  
18 mass campaign.

19           We did look at the ability to reach  
20 out to our progressive allies. We need  
21 serious discussion with our Native American  
22 allies, serious discussion with our Asian

1 allies and our allies that come out of the  
2 Latino community. That's important because  
3 as the demographics of this nation change we  
4 are also in danger, Dr. Anderson, of being in  
5 a situation where more and more people who  
6 are coming, and I'm certainly not  
7 anti-immigrant by any stretch of the  
8 imagination, but unless we are having those  
9 conversations people will not be clear about  
10 what the nature of what our struggle has been  
11 because many of them come quite frankly as a  
12 result of the struggle of African people in  
13 this country.

14 I don't say that chauvinistically.  
15 I say that simply as a matter of historical  
16 fact, having opened up benefits and so forth.  
17 We are in fact as Dr. Claude Anderson has  
18 said the least preferred minority in this  
19 country. It is true in reality the way it  
20 plays out, if you're white you're all right,  
21 yellow, mellow, brown, stick around, and  
22 black, get back. That's how it works in

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1 reality in this society.

2           So others can come, and we  
3 encourage them to come, but they need to  
4 understand that we're not at the bottom  
5 simply because we are lazy and shiftly and  
6 cowardly and whatever. It is because white  
7 supremacy and racism do reign supreme and  
8 that ruthlessly applies that colloquialism  
9 from the African American community that our  
10 mothers and fathers understood so well.

11           So we need to have these  
12 conversations with the most progressive  
13 sectors of these other communities so they  
14 can join with us even as our sister has  
15 joined us in explaining and sharing the  
16 struggles of Japanese Americans in terms of  
17 the struggle.

18           I'd like to close by just offering  
19 a couple of other quick observations in terms  
20 of the conversation, in terms of concepts  
21 that we really need to drive home, and  
22 they've been alluded to here today. That is

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1 we have to understand when particularly  
2 African Americans talk about well, that's  
3 been a long time ago as if somehow that which  
4 happened in the past does not impact the  
5 present.

6           Walter Rodney put it on the line  
7 clearly. He laid out a concept called  
8 development and underdevelopment. That is to  
9 say that Europeans benefited in terms of the  
10 transatlantic slave trade. They benefited.  
11 They were developed while simultaneously  
12 Africa was underdeveloped. We could have  
13 named names. Barclay's Bank and Lloyd's of  
14 London, all of these companies come directly  
15 out of the surplus profit generated out of  
16 the slave trade.

17           The escalation and intensification,  
18 the multiply effect, all of those things in  
19 terms of the industrial and commercial  
20 revolutions are related to the transatlantic  
21 slave trade. These things get passed on  
22 intergenerationally. Sometimes it's hard for

1 people to understand that. In Youngstown,  
2 Ohio, my father was a steel worker. In 1956  
3 as a result of the Hungarian revolt people  
4 from Hungary came to this country. They were  
5 able to get jobs at higher levels in the  
6 steel industry than my father could get  
7 because certain jobs had been set aside on  
8 the basis of skin color.

9           It didn't matter that the  
10 Hungarians were just getting here. Certainly  
11 we supported them in their not being  
12 repressed but that's beside the point. The  
13 point is that for eons and eons, decades,  
14 there were certain jobs set aside for white  
15 folks. That was an historical affirmative  
16 action program for white folks.

17           It gets passed on intergeneration-  
18 ally to the extent that we were confined to  
19 the cotton plantations as wage laborers, as  
20 sharecroppers, in the South while others were  
21 coming across by the millions to work in the  
22 factories and the foundries. Even if

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1 capitalism was exploiting them it was a hell  
2 of a lot better making a wage in a factory  
3 and a foundry and a mine than it was on a  
4 plantation being a sharecropper where at the  
5 end of the year when you went to the boss  
6 somehow or another no matter how good your  
7 math was you always ended up with a deficit.

8 That got passed on intergeneration-  
9 ally as a benefit. Their children had an  
10 endowment. They got a piece of that wealth  
11 that Dr. Anderson was talking about; we had  
12 an intergenerational deficit.

13 So this is not theoretical. This  
14 is not ethereal. This is real stuff that I  
15 think would come out in terms of, again, an  
16 exploration of HR-40 and this commission  
17 that's being talked about.

18 So, brothers and sisters, I think  
19 that we are again to commend Congressman  
20 Conyers and the staff for sticking on this  
21 question. Again, my preference, and I think  
22 it's been stated, and I was delighted to hear

1 on a little jaunt that we just had called  
2 Cruising into Activism that Jenita Obadele  
3 (?) and her sisters were a part of, and we  
4 have this conversation where NCOBRA has  
5 actually done a survey and that a significant  
6 number of people do prefer the concept of  
7 what I call a corporate or collective  
8 response in terms of reparations.

9 I'm not interested in a check.  
10 Others may be. I'm not. I'm looking for  
11 institutional and structural healing and  
12 reconstruction of the African community. I  
13 would love for us to be able to have a  
14 significant investment in Dr. Claude  
15 Anderson's concept of powernomics. That's  
16 the kind of systemic, strategic investments  
17 that we need to make in terms of reparations.

18 I conclude by saying that it may be  
19 for reparations; as he said before, I believe  
20 it's now or never and for the 21st century it  
21 is compete or perish. All of the stuff about  
22 what happened and didn't happen, unless we

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1 are organized and mobilized to step up to the  
2 plate, to agitate, to educate, and to do  
3 whatever is necessary then nobody really will  
4 care much about what happened to Africans in  
5 America. Thank you very much.

6 (Applause)

7 MR. DANIELS: I think we have  
8 probably a couple of minutes for responses  
9 and questions. We do have to close at 4:00.  
10 Dr. Height, did you have a comment you wanted  
11 to make?

12 Attorney Adjua Ayatoro?

13 MS. KILLINGHAM: Stand up, please,  
14 Brother, both of you, yes, and, Brother, you?  
15 This is sister Marilyn Killingham who chairs  
16 the D.C. chapter of NCOBRA. You can join us  
17 every third Thursday at the Reeves Building  
18 at 14th and U Street at 7:00. We need you,  
19 the children need you, the nation and the  
20 future need you. Thank you.

21 MR. DANIELS: Sister Adjua Ayatoro?

22 MS. AYATORO: Thank you. One of

1 the things I was going to do is to do what  
2 M----- did which is to give us some concrete  
3 ways to get involved so that we don't leave  
4 here without it. There is a sister, our  
5 northeast regional representative from  
6 NCOBRA. Could you stand up? She has some  
7 information about NCOBRA, membership forms  
8 and other things. She's passed them out. If  
9 you didn't get one please be in touch with  
10 her or with Mama Killingham to get that  
11 information.

12 The one thing I wanted to raise  
13 very quickly that's just been started up in  
14 me, we've raised Callie House's name. We  
15 have not raised two names that I would like  
16 us just to put here. One is Reverend Isaiah  
17 Dickerson (?) that was the manager along with  
18 Callie House of the ex-slave pension fund who  
19 was also jailed in the mail fraud.

20 The last name is Mama Sharshi  
21 McIntyre (?). Sharshi McIntyre is my mentor.  
22 She made her transition in 1998. She was 65

1 or 66 years old. One of the things that  
2 Sharshi taught me is that regardless of how  
3 hard it may appear, regardless of how tough  
4 the struggle may be, we must raise up this  
5 claim of reparations.

6 She was a scholar. She was well  
7 thought of in many, many circles. One of the  
8 things that I think, Sharshi, I know for me,  
9 brought to the table is the thing that all of  
10 us I think need to leave with you is it  
11 doesn't matter how much knowledge we have.  
12 It doesn't matter how many degrees we have or  
13 don't have behind our name. If we are not  
14 fighting for the liberation of peoples  
15 against oppression, and in this sense we're  
16 fighting for the liberation of African  
17 peoples worldwide but most particularly here  
18 in the United States, if we aren't doing that  
19 the degrees don't mean anything, the  
20 knowledge doesn't mean anything because all  
21 we're really doing is as Malcolm X says is  
22 we're contributing to the problem and not to

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1 the solution.

2 So I leave here again charging each  
3 and every one of you along with the work of  
4 all of our co-panelists that we have to leave  
5 here willing and able to fight for  
6 reparations and we need to do it. Thank you.

7 MR. DANIELS: I'd like to now  
8 recognize and for the final announcement or  
9 comment Cynthia Martin on the staff of  
10 Congressman Conyers, and I have one final  
11 announcement as the acting chair.

12 MS. MARTIN: Mr. Conyers wanted me  
13 to be sure and make everyone aware of his Web  
14 site. He plans to put the strategies that  
15 were brought forth today on the Web in a  
16 written form so that you can go onto the Web  
17 site, print them out, take them out, use  
18 them, et cetera, and his Web site address is  
19 [www.house.gov/conyers](http://www.house.gov/conyers). You should look for  
20 it in about a month's time. So I just wanted  
21 to make you aware of his Web site.

22 Could I say it one more time?

1 Sure, [www.house.gov/conyers](http://www.house.gov/conyers). If you have any  
2 problem with that Web site address our phone  
3 number is (202) 225-5126. Thanks.

4 MR. DANIELS: I'd simply like to  
5 say in concluding that again I'm the  
6 executive director of the Center for  
7 Constitutional Rights. We did on May 13th  
8 have what I consider, I hope, was a very  
9 important symposium on reparations. Sister  
10 Adjua Ayatoro was there. Marilyn Clements  
11 (?) from the board was there. There were a  
12 number of people who were there. I simply  
13 want to indicate that as the executive  
14 director of the Center for Constitutional  
15 Rights I do see this as a critical issue in  
16 my capacity with the Center for  
17 Constitutional Rights, and I have one of my  
18 able board members sitting next to me, Joanne  
19 Watson (?).

20 I'm hoping that the center can  
21 continue to play a role particularly around  
22 the effort of trying to expand the education

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1 and reaching out to other constituencies  
2 beyond the African American community.

3 Let me conclude by saying that  
4 again it's been good to be a part of this  
5 session. As I look around the room and see  
6 all of the chairpersons of the Judiciary  
7 Committee we look forward to the time when in  
8 fact John Conyers' portrait will hang on  
9 these walls. Thank you very much.

10 MR. HALE: Could I just make an  
11 announcement? I have a copy of the letter  
12 that I wrote to my dear friend Walter  
13 Williams on there and a copy of the article  
14 he wrote where he said he was happy that his  
15 ancestors had been slaves. So you're free to  
16 take both items there and also my bill in the  
17 Michigan House of Representatives.

18 MS. MEEK: As you're leaving, join  
19 me in thanking all of the presenters today.  
20 Sam Anderson, we thank God for him. Sister  
21 Yvette Simmons, president, National Bar  
22 Association; Dr. Claude Anderson. We thank

1 God for the honorable Ed Vaughn, the  
2 legendary Dr. Dorothy Irene Height. We  
3 appreciate Ron Daniels, the executive  
4 director of the Center for Constitutional  
5 Rights; the honorable Derrick Hill. Thank  
6 God for attorney Adjua Ayatoro, legal  
7 director of NCOBRA. Thank God for Dr. Conrad  
8 Worrill, president of the National Black  
9 United Front. And past president of the  
10 Japanese American Citizen's League and former  
11 assistant executive director of the National  
12 YWCA of the USA, our sister Lillian Kamura.  
13 Thank you.

14 (Whereupon, the PROCEEDINGS were  
15 adjourned.)

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